

TOWARDS AN AESTHETIC OF RETREAT:
NEO-STOICISM, RECUSANT CULTURE AND GARDENS IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of English
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

By
ANNE CECILIA KELLY

PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis.

DISCLAIMER

Reference in this thesis to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favouring by the University of Saskatchewan. The views and opinions of the author expressed herein do not state or reflect those of the University of Saskatchewan, and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other uses of materials in this thesis in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of English
320 Arts Building
University of Saskatchewan
9 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK S7N 5A5

OR
Dean

College of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Saskatchewan
107 Administration Place
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A2
Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
FIRE REKINDLED: THE GARDEN AND ITS PLACE IN SCOTTISH LITERARY	
CULTURE.....	1
ALEXANDER MONTGOMERIE AND THE CORRECTIONS OF POETRY.....	16
“EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN wes my name”: SELF AND SPACE IN JACOBEOAN	
SCOTLAND.....	34
OPPOSITION, RECONCILIATION, AND THE WRITING OF POETRY IN <i>THE CHERRIE</i>	
<i>AND THE SLAE</i>	49
TRADITION, INVENTION, AND THE HARMONIOUS “PLAY” OF SCOTTISH	
LITERATURE.....	69
WORKS CITED.....	80

INTRODUCTION

Fire Rekindled: The Garden and its Place in Scottish Literary Culture

In his critical essay “Anacrisis: or, A Censure of some Poets Ancient and Modern,” the Scottish writer and politician William Alexander compares the poem to a garden. Having undergone a period of “great Travel both of Body and of Mind,” Alexander, according to his own account, retired to the place of his birth and sought to “recreate” himself in the writing of poetry. Not only conversing with the Ancients – “kindling [his] Fire at those Fires which do still burn out of the Ashes of Ancient authors” (159) – Alexander engages with the Moderns as well and asserts the importance of the vernacular.¹ Those who value the former tradition alone run the risk of allowing their judgement to be corrupted by the beauty of Greek and Latin, since, after all, “Language is but the Apparel of Poetry.” At this point in his essay Alexander introduces his analogy of the garden:

I value Language as a Conduit, the Variety thereof to several Shapes, and adorned Truth or witty Inventions that which it should deliver: I compare a Poem to a Garden, the disposing of the Parts of the one to the several Walks of the other: The Decorum kept in Descriptions and representing of Persons, to the Proportions and Distances to be observed in such Things as are planted therein, and the Variety of Invention to the Diversity of Flowers thereof. (159)

¹ Where necessary for primary texts in Scots, repunctuation has been undertaken and spellings have been adjusted toward modern conventions. Letters forms like yogh and thorn, for example, have been given their modern equivalents.

Like a gardener, the poet thus orders “Shapes” and “Parts” to achieve inventive fluency.

Invention flourishes in the “Proportions and Distances” which govern the whole of the poem.

Descending from classical rhetoric, the application of landscape description to poetic theory is commonplace (Curtius 193-94; Carruthers 33-34). It regularly refers to concepts about retirement and recuperation: the regeneration of the self is often shown to be connected to the recurrent renewal of literary traditions, as fire is passed down from one generation of authors to the next. Whether represented as continuity (sparks still burning from the phoenix-like ashes of the Ancients), innovation (the donning of modish new apparel), as a refreshing channel of water, or as a well laid-out garden, poetry assumes manifold shapes in Alexander’s depiction. When the modern poet risks burning out, sparks ignite through the discovery of literary continuity.

Alexander draws heavily but not slavishly on the work of Sir Philip Sidney, whose long pastoral romance, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia*, strongly influenced literary culture in Jacobean Scotland (Parkinson, *Arcadia* 252-54). Early in the *New Arcadia*, Sidney sets the scene with a significantly ambiguous depiction of a garden. The garden is located behind Kalander’s house, which, upon first description, cuts an impressive figure, having been “built of fair and strong stone, not affecting so much any extraordinary kind of fineness as an honourable representing of a firm stateliness” (12). The house reflects its master’s virtues and is designed with the guest’s well-being in mind: “the lights, doors, and stairs rather directed to the use of the guest than to the eye of the artificer” (12). Over against the certainty which Kalander’s firm and stately house conveys is the area situated behind it, which “was neither field, garden, and orchard – or rather it was both field, garden, and orchard” all at once (14). Trees offering the “most taste-pleasing fruits” form a virtual pavilion, and the profuse, elaborate flowerbeds below seem like a “mosaical floor, so that it seemed that art therein would needs be delightful by counterfeiting his

enemy, error, and making order into confusion” (14). This unsettlingly double place contains a pond that shows forth two gardens, “one indeed, the other in shadows” (14). Accordingly, the symbolic pictures in Kalander’s garden house represent ancient tales of love and its attendant suffering. In his *Defense of Poetry*, Sidney also alludes to the dangers of poetic artifice for a Puritan sensibility: “Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too much loved earth more lovely” (24). Such artifice makes “too much loved” Nature even more so, to the imperilment of all who luxuriate in the pleasant place of literary tradition.

Long before the Reformation, instability and entrapment featured in the literary representation of the garden. Cultivated into various forms of the earthly Eden in twelfth-century literature (Pearsall and Salter 56-75), the garden acquired secular associations as the venue for courtly love. In this garden reverberate the words of Solomon’s book: “*Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus*” [“My sister my spouse is as a garden inclosed”; Fischer et al., 999].² Medieval representations of the earthly paradise, as Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter note, “often confidently and naturally combine imagery from the Song of Songs and Genesis with other kinds of descriptive material, naturalistic and literary” (80). The most influential of medieval garden poems and one of the central works of courtly literature, the thirteenth-century *Roman de la Rose* depicts the courtier’s entry into a walled garden, an allegorical realm designed for instruction in the art of love. All is not perfect in this earthly paradise, which recalls another garden and its attendant loss. The dreamer is blinded by the death fountain of Narcissus (ll. 1642-45) and has his folly pointed out to him by Reason (ll. 3224-26). Veering between happiness and misery, success and deprivation (Pearsall and Salter 89), the dreamer ultimately finds his fortunes reversed and the beauties of the garden subject to decay (ll. 20351-56). A Boethian

² For the translation, see Hammond and Adamson.

spirit pervades this garden, which functions as a *memento mori*, intimating that with growth comes decay, with joy, sorrow.

Such signs are decisively evident in Chaucer's *Parlement of Fowles*. Chaucer's garden at first seems ideal, a harmonious place in which "no man may ther wexe sek ne olde; / Yet was ther joye more than a thousand folde / Than man can telle" (ll. 207-09). Chaucer offsets the apparent stability and bliss of Nature's garden (ll. 171-210) by the situation therein of the Temple of Venus, on the walls of which are painted images of suffering lovers (ll. 281-94). Desire is imperfectly fulfilled in a world governed by the instability and impermanence which the garden so deceptively conceals within itself, since it appears at first to offer the opposite to all who approach it. Overturning the expectations of perfect love and contemplation which the opening pages of the *New Arcadia* stimulate, Sidney outdoes Chaucer and brings pastoral romance into a newly subversive world of implication. He draws attention to the neglect of pressing political issues in a courtly world governed by pastoral values. As David Norbrook recognises, the ruler of this courtly world attempts "to turn his life into a work of art," and thus goes astray: "by delighting in pastoral poetry in the charmed seclusion of his rural retreat he has neglected more important political issues" (93). Not only resting on impermanent ground, the garden also leads to the denial of social responsibilities.

The pastoral genre which Sidney thus subverts had come to be strongly associated with the superiority of the country to the city and the values of retirement, contemplation, and love, thus lending itself to the aristocratic world of Renaissance court culture (Fowler 190-92; Hubbard 4, 5). Underlying the pastoral genre is a longing for a Golden Age unbound by time, a "dream, based perhaps on childhood, perhaps ... on the dream alone" (Lerner 245). As Thomas K. Hubbard points out, in its original form the pastoral dealt less with idealized notions of retreat

than with literary heritage itself, since poets are represented as shepherds “strutting their stuff in musical contests or unappreciated serenades” (5). Thus they assert a place for themselves, apart from and even opposed to their elders. The pastoral thus offers a medium for the assertion of the poet’s identity, establishing the pattern of individuation through affiliation that informs Alexander’s representation in *Anacrisis* of the making of poetry, or of the “kindling” of fire from one’s literary predecessors. In spite of Sidney’s criticism of the pastoral genre, social harmony, observes Norbrook, is maintained through the performance of ceremonial rites in the *New Arcadia* (103-04). The pastoral thus appears to look both ways. Retrospective, it expresses longing for a time of lost innocence and happiness. And yet that backward glance also takes into its view literary precedent, encouraging progression in the creation of new poetic forms.

Important a cultural conduit as is Sidney’s *Arcadia*, William Alexander’s topic of the poetical garden has deeper, native roots. In medieval Scottish literature the pastoral genre underlies discussions about the writing of poetry and the relation of Middle Scots authors to their literary predecessors. Poetic activity is organically represented in the opening prologue of the Middle Scots poet Robert Henryson’s *Fables*: as flowers and wheat spring from intractable soil diligently cultivated, “Sa springis thar a morall sweit sentence / Oute of the subtell dyte [*subtle artifice*] of poetry / To gude purpois, quha [*if one*] culd it weill apply” (ll. 12-14). The poet establishes a pattern of continuity in working the difficult ground, or “bustious eird,” of literary heritage, intensifying Chaucer’s treatment of the same concept in *The Parlement of Fowles*, wherein old books are like “old felde,” out of which, “Cometh al this newe corne fro yeer to yeer” (ll. 22-23). Fused in Henryson’s opening prologue are tradition and invention, for the poet follows literary precedent while also asserting the power of the vernacular. Henryson turns Aesop’s fables into Scots and thereby makes of them “ane mater of translatioun” (32). Hubbard’s

description of the pastoral as a medium for finding poetic identity thus comes to mind in Henryson's assertion of vernacular authorship. As Tim William Machan notes, "What Henryson dramatizes, in effect, is the birth of the vernacular author whose father is literary authority and whose mother is vernacular language" (130). The organic reception and production of literary texts occurs through the cultivation of intractable Scottish soil, while the origin of Machan's "vernacular author" arises from the same set of agrarian motifs.

A sense of loss pervades Middle Scots representations of the poetic craft, however. Contained within Prologue XIII of Gavin Douglas's translation of Vergil's *Aeneid* (1513) can be found a rendition of a familiar springtime scene, with Phoebus depicted benevolently "Defundand from hys sege etheriall / Glaid influent aspectis celicall" [*Pouring down from his heavenly seat / The pleasing effect of a celestial gaze*] (ll. 41-42). And yet this apparently harmonious world contains inner dissonance, a note of discord which, as David Parkinson notes, voices "perennial concerns . . . over the misprision of exalted literature by venal, ignorant readers" ("Orpheus" 108). Like the experience of the beautiful yet perilous garden, the writing of poetry is a task as costly as it is rewarding. In the opening prologue of the *Fables*, Henryson asserts the vernacular poet's power of invention, and yet also expresses concerns over the effectiveness of his craft: wholesome, sustaining matter can be derived from poetry, but only "To gude purpois, quha [*if one*] culd it weill apply" (l. 14). This verse line reveals the poet's uncertainty whether his work will be properly interpreted or not. Henryson is not alone among Scots poets in expressing concerns about the effectiveness of his craft: "Poetry can shadow forth the ideal intellectual harmony of the world, but the poet, when he looks at the fallen human world, can only say, with Orpheus, 'I am expert, and wo is me tharfore'" (Fox cix). The

limitations of human understanding and the ephemerality of human experience make the writing of poetry a difficult task indeed, as the Middle Scots poets were well aware.

To cultivate the “bustious eird” of literary tradition is hard, thankless toil. To do so seems futile in a period during which expected modes of cultural expression are being turned upside down and spaces for the assertion of poetic identity increasingly few and far between. A case in point is early modern Scotland, where the Protestant Reformation gave rise to a transition made harsh by the Kirk’s violent opposition to values it depicted as idolatry and superstition. Because the Kirk infixed Protestant theology so comprehensively and systematically in Scotland’s culture, the Reformation there was more thoroughgoing than it was in England (Todd 2, 6). The Scottish reformers were inventive in their own way, developing new forms of ritual while at the same time preserving old ones, in an effort, as Margo Todd writes, to create a new way of life: what emerges is a “rearrangement of fundamental beliefs enacted or performed in such a way as to achieve a meaningful new order, relating sacred to secular, individual to God and to community” (6). Rituals included, for example, the dramatic performance of “making penance,” whereby penitents, dressed and provided with material accessories to demonstrate the offense brought on by the penance, would, in a staged and choreographed church setting, assume prescribed positions and move within a process of sinners, while the godly audience present was expected to respond to this form of dramatic display in an equally performative and scripted way (Todd 128-29). In what Catherine Bell describes as a “re-shaping of consciousness and experience” and a force which establishes “a view of reality and a corresponding view of self . . . creating a subjective psychological state that restructures meaning” (222), ritual thus sheds light on the Protestant Reformation and accounts for its effectiveness there (Todd 6).

Corresponding to and complicating Bell's definition of ritual is the writing of poetry itself: now the tired and troubled poet engages with an established literary tradition – tilling the “bustious eird” of Henryson's prologue – and experiences recreation through that process. In the face of mortality and historical discontinuity Scottish poets in the later sixteenth century seek to assert continuity. The recuperative and recreative aspects of poetic activity are expressed, for instance, in a poem in the Maitland Quarto Manuscript (c.1586), an important collection of contemporary poems in Scots. The anonymous poem entitled “In Prayse of Lethingtoun” opens by evoking the country seats of ancient authors, thus implicitly affiliating with them the object of its commendation, the writer and courtier Sir Richard Maitland, whose merits are extolled through the praises which the speaker lavishes on his house, Lethingtoun. While Maitland is appended to a line of great authors, so too the poet who honours him makes a place for himself among the attendant throng: he avows that his topic is best treated by Homer and Virgil but tries a hand at it anyway (53-56). Similarly John Rolland blends tradition and invention in his 1575 dream-vision *The Court of Venus*, drawing on classical and biblical scholarship in the manner of Continental Christian humanists (Lyall, “Christian” 108) and strikes a Janus-like pose between an earlier allegorical poetic tradition in Scotland and a later one (Bawcutt, “Rolland” 12). As well Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth establishes a pattern of filiation in his poem on James VI's assertion in 1579 of his personal rule. Polwarth opens *The Promine* (1580) with terms of praise for the king which echo Douglas's exalted representation of his literary model, Vergil, in the Prologue to Book One of the *Eneados*. One author's follower becomes a later contender's exemplar. Polwarth ends the introductory epistle of the *Promine* on a personal note:

Than if thay spear, the Author to alledge	[ask; identify]
Quha wrait the verse, I shall say it was I,	[Quha]
And shall not sussie men given to Invy,	[heed]
Bot quhen thay lak or lauchis at my letter	[find fault with; laugh]
Bauldie shall say in giving the defy	[Boldly; in retort]
Upon the subiect, se quha can do better. (f. Ai.v)	[see]

Polwarth's insistent personal pronouns in this stanza and his increasingly aggressive assertion of self illustrate how Scottish poets hoist the standard of their own authorship in the mustered cultural heritage they have evoked.

The court poet said to have chased Polwarth in the early years of the king's reign from the bardic chair in the "chimney nook" was deeply sensitive to the recreative force of poetry and an ideal candidate for a study of affiliation and assertion in Scottish literature. Alexander Montgomerie (c.1550s-1598) was master poet at the court of James VI in the early to mid 1580s and a central player in the Scottish Renaissance of the latter decades of the sixteenth century. At once intensely, even self-consciously derivative and yet also highly inventive, Montgomerie combines old and new literary practices. He engages with writers from the Continent, especially French court poets, and from Scotland itself. Nor is he simply responding to contemporary literature alone; in the context of an earlier Scottish literary tradition, his poems gain depth and significance. As the main subject of a study about the cultivation of poetry in the latter half of the sixteenth century, therefore, Alexander Montgomerie is ideal. In the succeeding chapters of particular interest is Montgomerie's handling of his literary heritage in his representation of his changing fortunes. Alienated in the final decade of his life from the court and from mainstream

Scottish culture, Montgomerie finds in literature room for the articulation of values separate from those which govern circles once familiar to him. Thus he emerges as an especially interesting exponent of a poetry of rootedness, resistance, and sustainment.

To consider Montgomerie in relation to literary authority requires attention to his complex relations with his political master, James VI. An apprentice to the master poet of the Scottish court, James VI establishes in the mid-1580s a line of literary filiation between himself and Montgomerie. In his youthful treatise *Reulis and Cautelis to be Observit and Eschewit in Scottish Poesie* (1584), James draws heavily on Montgomerie's verse to illustrate dominant styles. In his preface James observes that, since "the warld is waxit auld" between the time in which such guidebooks were written in other languages and the time of the king's writing, an updated version of them was necessary: "As for them, that wrait [*wrote*] of auld, lyke as the tyme is changeit sensyne [*since*], sa is the ordeour of Poesie changeit" (23). The opening gesture of the *Reulis and Cautelis* thus recalls the changing "forme[s] of speche" (II.22) which Chaucer describes in the prologue to the second book of *Troilus and Criseyde* and, more widely, the medieval representation of poetry as a seasonal craft. In the *Reulis and Cautelis*, James adapts the form of the poetic handbook established a decade earlier in England. He lays out rules for scansion and rhyme to reflect the innate rhythms and inflections of Scots speech. In order to achieve what the king describes as "*Flowing*" verse, Scottish poets should, for example, avoid placing words of more than two or three syllables in either the first or last position of a verse line (31). As "ane of the chief vertewis in a Poete" (66), "Invention" underlies but also complicates the royal rules, as is evident in James's directions for translation: "ye not only essay not your awin ingyne of *Inuentioun*, bot be the same meanes, ye are bound, as to a staik [*tethering post* (or *vine stake*)], to follow that buikis phrasis, quhilk ye translate" (35). Translation of a looser kind

underlies James's use of the image of the "staik" in this passage, for it recalls Gavin Douglas's own representation of his literary relation to Vergil in the opening prologue of the *Eneados*:

"Quha [*That which*] is attachit ontill [*to*] a staik, we se, / May go na ferthir bot wreil about [*circle around*] that tre: / Rycht so [*likewise*] am I to Virgillis text ybund [*bound*]" (11). For James, one of the poet's chief virtues, invention remains supported by – or tethered to – literary tradition.

As Montgomerie's verse exemplifies the grounded invention which James promotes in his treatise enables Scottish poets to assert literary continuity while at the same time creating a space for themselves within that line of poetic achievement. Montgomerie diverges from tradition by reinventing elements of it, and rarely do his divergences more strikingly celebrate tradition than in his *Flyting with Patrick Hume of Polwarth*. In spite – or perhaps because – of the crudely polarizing tactics it displays, flyting, as Sally Mapstone notes, relies on mutual sharing, on a "dependent independence" between poets engaged in this tradition exchange of invective (20). The *Flyting* between Montgomerie and Polwarth provides a "site for discussion of literary practice, and for kinds of poetic transition" (Mapstone 34). The creative reworking of another's material is also related to the recreation of the self, for as James writes in his treatise, "Bot sen *Invention*, is ane of the chief vertewis in a Poete, it is best that ye inuent your awin subject, your self, and not to compose of sene subiectis" (66). The subject of invention is as much the poet as the material at hand. This process of asserting continuity through the creative appropriation of earlier texts becomes increasingly unstable in Montgomerie's verse, however. As he grows further and further away from the court and royal favour, Montgomerie writes verse which is less and less safe or serviceable. In his hands, literary renovation occurs in rapid and unexpected ways that mirror the volatility of the poet's fortunes. Montgomerie's verse thus

offers a vividly, politically fraught example of the making and reception of poetry in early modern Scotland.

Related to the writing of poetry and offering restorative properties of its own, gardening was a popular pursuit in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotland. While Regent from 1572 to 1578, the fourth earl of Morton, James Douglas, renovated and extended Aberdour Castle (Historic Scotland). During his demission from the regency in the spring of 1578, Morton retired to Lochleven castle, passing his time there “devising the situation of a fayre gardene with allyis” (qtd Brown 210). Keith Brown reads Morton’s retreat as neo-Stoic: gardening offers Morton a “consoling retreat from the troubles of a violent and unstable world” (210). In the later sixteenth century, the garden was associated with neo-Stoicism by Renaissance humanists such as the Flemish classicist Justus Lipsius (Morford 160-70). Functioning both “as an artefact and as a metaphor for an outlook on life” (Allan, “A Commendation” 60), the garden can be seen as a form of twofold cultivation, that of a space which is both literal and figurative: as such, the *locus amoenus* becomes a rhetorical topic that is as much specific as it is general, for while carrying figurative meaning, it is also rooted within a precise cultural, regional, and mental framework. As David Allan writes, the application of neo-Stoic principles to gardening appealed to the “philosophical needs” of a Scotland beset by political and religious upheaval in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the active expression of neo-Stoic values through horticulture, Scottish nobles sought retirement from the cares of the world and regeneration in peaceful seclusion.

The Scottish poet and prominent politician Alexander Seton, first earl of Dunfermline (1555-1622), is often situated among those Scottish nobles reputedly inclined to retreat and contemplation (Brown 210; Bath, *Decorative* 79-80; Allan, *Philosophy* 109-11). Seton’s father

was Keeper of the Household to Mary Queen of Scots and his aunt, Mary Seton, one of the “four Maries” who attended the queen during her period of exile (Lynch; Bath, *Decorative* 79). His Catholic background and private confession of faith notwithstanding, Seton himself led an illustrious career as an eminent lawyer who would later occupy a number of important administrative positions, not least among them that of Lord Chancellor, an office to which he was appointed in 1604 (Lee). To all this Seton added cultural accomplishments as well, meriting a contemporary kinsman’s portrayal of him as a “great humanist in prose and poecie, Greek and Latine, well versed in the mathematicks [who] had great skill in architecture and heraldrie” (Maitland 63). Seton’s neoclassicism is evident in his architectural pursuits, notably the castle at Fyvie Castle (which was remodelled for Seton after he bought the estate in 1596), and Pinkie House in Musselburgh, a model of the Roman *villa suburbana* and the chancellor’s residence of choice, to which he made extensive additions in 1613 (Howard 64-65, 103; Bath 79-80). An inscription in the house’s long gallery declares, “A happy home is preferable to a large home. Often toil and sorrow dwell in palaces, peace and happiness in cottages” (trans. Howard 207). Seton’s values are declared through architectural motifs, so that Pinkie House itself became a site representative of neoclassical and, specifically, neo-Stoic principles. These values are made explicit in the inscription on the wall of the house’s fountained garden, for example:

D. O. M. [*Dominus optima maxima*] For himself, for his descendants, for all civilized men, Alexander Seton, lover of mankind and civilization, founded, built and adorned his villa and gardens and these out-of-town buildings. Here is nothing warlike, even for defence; no ditch, no rampart. But for the kind welcome

and hospitable entertainment of guests a fountain of pure water, lawns, ponds and aviaries. (trans. Howard 51)

The virtues of Kalanders house in Sidney's *New Arcadia* are evoked more unambiguously in this description of Pinkie House and of its owner. Congruent values emerge in Seton's impressive use of emblematic devices in the painted ceiling of the house's long gallery itself a reinvention of classical models (Coope 66-67; Bath, *Decorative* 83). For Michael Bath, Seton's use of Renaissance emblematics can be understood as an extended act of neo-Stoic self-fashioning (79-103), while David Allan locates the Lord Chancellor within the same philosophical context, while also drawing attention to Seton as the "centre of a veritable matrix of contemporary Scottish gardening *eminenti*" (*Philosophy* 69). Neo-Stoicism and humanistic learning thus converge in the painted ceiling of a figure deeply involved in Scotland's mainstream culture yet known for his inclination to retirement and contemplation.

Of particular interest in this thesis are the forms taken in early modern Scotland by the age-old negotiation between the demands of public commitment and the attractions of private retreat. The withdrawal of the self and the consequent making and reading of poetry which are depicted in Sir William Alexander's "Anacrisis" suggest a strong relation between these themes and sheds light on their importance to Scottish culture during the long reign of James VI and I. Alexander kindles his poetic fire at that of his predecessors, illustrating how engagement with a received literary tradition becomes a way of recuperating and recreating oneself. This process of renovation is especially striking in Alexander Montgomerie's verse, in which genres, Alastair Fowler's "domains of association" (190), are subject to swift and at times risky reworking.

Accordingly, Montgomerie's poetry is the primary literary focus of this thesis. To study

language as the ground and conduit (as Sir William Alexander would have it) of Montgomerie's making, I have worked closely with the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, and especially with its component *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (DOST). In Chapter One I examine how Montgomerie responds to the specific philosophical tradition of neo-Stoicism and the literature of retreat, while developing an aesthetic for them that complicates their established associations. In Chapter Two I shift the focus of study to consider the painted ceiling at Pinkie House and Seton's inventive renovation therein of elements received from both the established emblem tradition and Scottish literary heritage. As a poet deeply involved in mainstream Scottish culture and yet also inclined toward retreat and the cultivation of values unamenable to the political and religious climate of the time, Seton provides a useful, slightly later parallel and point of comparison to Montgomerie. In Chapter Three, I turn to Montgomerie's longest poem, *The Cherrie and the Slae*, which exists in two forms, so that the second version of *The Cherrie and the Slae* is itself an exercise in literary invention. The poem complicates the expected motifs of dream-vision literature, while also absorbing elements of Montgomerie's earlier verse and at times even dramatizing them in relation to other more dramatic generic associations. In an early modern Scottish context to write poetry is to "invent your awin subject, your self." What is being rekindled through the renovation of literary texts is one's own fire.

CHAPTER ONE

Alexander Montgomerie and the Corrections of Poetry

Sir William Alexander's comparison of a poem to a formally laid-out garden provided a conceptual starting point for the Introduction of this thesis. For Alexander, the poetical "parts" and "Walks" include the "Decorum kept in Descriptions, and representing of Persons, to the Proportions and Distances to be observed in such things as are planted therein, and the Variety of Invention to the Diversity of Flowers thereof" (159). In "The Solsequium" by the poet and courtier Alexander Montgomerie, reckoning time with herbs and flowers brings its own share of troubles. "With cair ou'rcum [*overcome*] / And sorow when the sun goes out of sight" (Poem 21, ll. 3-4) like the heliotropic flower the *solsequium*, the speaker repeatedly mourns his beloved's departure and rejoices in her return. He recognises that

Thy presence me restores To lyf from death

Thy absence also shores To cut my breath (Poem 21, ll. 57-58), [*threatens*]

and yet he remains mechanically bound to his beloved, reviving only "throu favour of hir face" (Poem 21, l. 32). Elsewhere, Montgomerie's horticultural tropes similarly involve anxiety. In his sonnet "To Maistres Lily Ruthven Duches of Lennox" Montgomerie praises a contemporary figure who, along with her husband, briefly fell out of royal favour. Lily Ruthven married the second duke of Lennox, Ludovick Stuart, in 1591, a match which incurred the king's disapproval and resulted in the temporary withdrawal of both the much-favoured duke and his unwelcome new duchess from court (Montgomerie, II.101-02; Macpherson; Lyall, *Montgomerie* 159). In the

context of Montgomerie's poem, the duchess of Lennox becomes an emblem of constancy, "so brave a beuty" (Poem 74, l. 4). Strongly unlike the *solsequium*-lover, this Lily has a "staitly stalk" which "so streight up is and stay" (Poem 74, l. 2). In the gentle wordplay that continues through his sonnet to Lily Ruthven, Montgomerie depicts her namesake as "the first of flours" (Poem 74, l. 14). The lily's "blisfull beams" and "suetest smell" derive from above: "The Heuins on the sik happy grace bestowis" (Poem 74, ll. 9, 11, 12). Divine grace evidently outshines royal displeasure.

Montgomerie's sonnet illustrates the connections the historian David Allan has postulated between literary pastoralism, post-Renaissance garden cultivation, and neo-Stoic philosophy (Allan, "Commendation"; Allan, *Philosophy*). During the reign of James VI and I, Scottish poetry takes up afresh its longstanding role weighing the competing merits of public versus private commitments. In Montgomerie's verse, for instance, gaining a critical distance from public concerns enables a redirection of vision towards the spiritual realm. An alternative to outright retreat lies to hand, however, in literary dialogue, where the articulation of divergent perspectives is intrinsic to the making of poetry. Dialogue often prevails even where the drive seems most insistent to the rejection of public engagement.

This rejection underlies the rise of neo-Stoicism in sixteenth-century Europe. Promulgated through definitive printed editions of major classical texts, neo-Stoicism as it emerged in Renaissance Europe had an important practical appeal (Allan, *Philosophy* 1-45; Salmon 169-71). Intellectual figures imitated the ancients by applying the philosophy's tenets to their own lives. Chief among these was the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), celebrated for his editions of Tacitus (1574) and Seneca (1605), and for the enormously popular and influential treatise *De constantia* (1584), in which constancy is recommended as a remedy

for miserie (Long, *Stoics* 379). As A. A. Long notes, “Anyone seriously interested in Stoicism at the time had to read Lipsius,” for in his study of classical philosophy he found room for the application of ancient history, Christianity, and contemporary politics as well (379). In his *Essais* the philosopher Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) counselled “judicious retirement into virtuous detachment” by those suffering under political corruption (Allan, *Philosophy* 14-15). It is worth considering whether Alexander Montgomerie can be termed a vernacular exponent of neo-Stoicism in Jacobean Scotland. To be sure, Montgomerie’s disappointments reverberate in his verse, and not least in “To his Majestie for his Pensioun.” The first sonnet in this sequence of four deserves to be quoted in full:

Help (PRINCE) to whom, on whom not, I complene	
Bot on, not to, fals fortun ay my fo	
Quha but, not by a resone reft me fro	[<i>who without; plundered</i>]
Quho did, not does, yit suld my self sustene.	[<i>should</i>]
Of Crymis, not cairis, since I haif kept me clene	[<i>crimes; have</i>]
I thole, not thanks, thame, Sir, who serv’d me so,	[<i>endure; them</i>]
Quha heght, not held, to me and mony mo	[<i>promised; many</i>]
To help, not hurt, bot has not byding bene,	[<i>faithful</i>]
Sen will not wit, to lait whilk I lament	[<i>Since; too late which</i>]
Of sight not service, shed me from your grace.	
With, not without, your warrand yit I went,	
In wryt, not words, the papers ar in place.	

Sen chance, not change, has put me to this pane [pain]

Let richt, not reif, my Pensioun bring agane. (Poem 68, I, ll. 1-14) [theft]

The poet's "lament" (Poem 68, I. l. 9) is complicated at the outset by loyalty to the king, a complication reflected by the extended use of metanoia ("A rhetorical figure whereby a speaker retracts or corrects something said"; Harmon and Holman, s.v.). The speaker's complaint is directed "on, not to, fals fortun / Quha but, not by resone reft me fro / Quho did, not does, yit suld my self sustene" (Poem 68, I. ll. 2-4). While it frequently emphasises the absence of injustice, with the cause of complaint preceding the preferred alternative, metanoia can also avert a worse alternative, as in lines such as "Help (PRINCE) to whom, on whom not, I complene". The contorted syntax of this sonnet thus mirrors the struggle of an individual torn between what Allan describes as Ciceronian commitment and Senecan retreat. One might see enacted here the difficulty of maintaining Lipsian constancy under oppression.

As resentment deepens in the latter sonnets of "To his Majestie for his Pensioun," the rejection of the solsequium-impulse to gaze adoringly on royal power becomes overriding. Values distinct from those of "King, Court, Cuntrey" begin to emerge (Poem 68, IV, l. 1). Anaphora piles up a load of grievances, including "lose of guidis," "povertie, imprisonment or pane," "travell tint [*wasted*] and labour lost," all intensifying the poet's complaint, one which ends with the author's kinship in victimhood with the afflicted Virgil, Ovid, and Homer (Poem 68, II, ll. 2, 6, 9-11). If suffering befits those who write poetry then "Of all that craft my chance is to be chief" (Poem 68, II, l. 8). While the scenario posited in the second sonnet remains conditional, the speaker gains resolve in the third:

If I must begge it shall be far fra hame.

[from]

If I must want it is aganis my will. (Poem 68, III, ll.1-2)

The ‘if’ and ‘then’ structure that spanned the octave of the previous sonnet is here compressed into single lines. Long behind is the metanoic indirection whereby he first addressed the king, and the poet assumes a bitingly epigrammatic, Tacitean style. Compression indicates resolve, therefore, while new values such as “hope” (Poem 68, III, 7) and poetic “fame” (Poem 68, III, l.5) also emerge more decisively. Anaphora returns in the final sonnet of the sequence, but while in the second it had been a conditional vehicle of complaint, now it conveys the fixity of lament:

Adeu my King, Court, Cuntrey, and my kin,

Adeu suete Duke whose father held me deir,

Adeu Companiones Constable and Keir. (Poem 68, IV, ll.1-3).

Montgomerie depicts “My Tragedie” (Poem 68, IV, l.6) as a fall that cannot but move his hearers to sympathy. But as in the *moralitas* which concludes the tale of the “Paddock and the Mouse” in Robert Henryson’s *Fables* (ll. 2939-2947), anaphora when used in *de casibus* tragedy can represent more than utter pathos, for the image of the suffering poet serves an instructive function. From the king the address turns towards a small circle of loyal friends divided by circumstance: “thrie treuar hartis I trou [*believe*] shall neuer tuin [*part*]” (Poem 68, IV, l. 4; Lyall, *Montgomerie* 177; Lyall, “Thrie” 189-90). The sequence ends with the poet alone, seeking “perforce” for “my fathers sword” (Poem 68, IV, l. 14). His sovereign having failed him, his

friends having been dispersed, the speaker falls back upon his martial heritage as the only remaining remedy to his injured honour.

In later sixteenth-century Scotland, the Psalm was mightier than the sword as a protection in a hostile world. Thus Montgomerie's translation of the First Psalm responds to its celebration of unwavering rectitude amidst incurable vice. Unlike the "godles men" who are "as the chaffe or sand / Quhilk day by day / Winds dryvis [*drive*] away" (Poem 1, ll. 20-22), the "blissed" man embodies Lipsian constancy,

For he shall be

Lyk to the trie

Quhilk plantit by the running river growis. (Poem 1, ll. 11-13)

His divergence from "the way of sin" (Poem 1, l. 6) might seem Senecan in its wholehearted turning away from society. And yet the "blissed" man turns toward "Jehovahis lau" [*Jehova's law*], in which he "Delyts aricht / And studies it to knaw" (Poem 1, ll. 2, 9-10). He is also Stoic in the Ciceronian sense, for he produces "frute" and prospers in his "Actionis all" (Poem 1, ll. 14, 17). This emphasis on steadfastly positive action is already apparent in Montgomerie's handling of the first verse of this Psalm: he disposes of the negative form, replacing "*qui non abiit in consilio impiorum*" ["that hath not gone in the counsel of the impious"] of the Vulgate and Clément Marot's version "*Qui au conseil des malins n'a esté*" ["who did not go in the counsel of the malicious"] (Poem 1, l. 1) with "Eschew ill Counsell and the godles gait" [*way*] (Poem 1, l. 4).³ The rejection of "ill Counsell and the godles gait" is performed "Be grace"

³ Translation from the Vulgate is from the Douai-Rheims edition of the Bible. Translations from Marot are the author's.

(Poem 1, l. 3). Confronted by “sin” and threatened by “mockers” (Poem 1, ll. 6, 8) the speaker, in an act of spiritual metanoia – self-correction or even conversion – turns toward God.

The misdirecting and corrective redirecting of attention become centrally important in Montgomerie’s poems, and notably in his oft-reprinted “A godly Prayer”:

Peccavi Pater, miserere mei. [*Father I have sinned; be merciful to me*]

I am not worthy to be cald thy chylde

Who stubburnely haif look’t so long astray, [*have*]

Not lyk thy sone bot lyk the prodigue wyld. (Poem 4, ll. 1-4)

The penitent turns to God for assistance in his plight, recognizing that his “sillie saull with sin is so defyld / That Satan seeks to catch it as his pray” (Poem 4, ll. 5-6) and asking that “God grant me grace” that Satan “may be begyld” (Poem 4, l.7). While Montgomerie can use “grace” to signify favour in one form of courtship or another, he can confine its signification to religious experience (e.g., Poems 3, l.1; 5, l. 3; 23, l. 27). Similarly, terms like “countenance,” which refers to the sustaining appearance of the beloved in several poems (e.g., Poems 21, l. 25; 23, l. 61; 40, ll. 25-48; 44, ll. 7-9), can be detached from their familiar temporal associations, as in one of the final lyrics in the Ker MS, “Come my Childrene dere” (Poem 98). Although using the “language of sexual love” (Lyall, “Channoun” 11) to express the speaker’s relationship to his “Lord” and “Prince most Royal” (Poem 98, ll. 11, 13), Montgomerie distinguishes worldly from divine love at the outset of the poem: his is “no eirthly thing” (Poem 98, l. 4) but rather a “Love / Far above / Other Loves all I say” (Poem 98, ll. 5-7), and one which is “sure / To indure / When as all things shall decay” (Poem 98, ll. 8-10). It is in this context that Christ’s face appears, “the

favor / Of his Countenance so fair” (Poem 98, ll. 21-22). The speaker in this poem urges his audience to “Let his countenance content the / Since he is the king of glore” (Poem 98, ll. 53-55). God’s authority is also proclaimed in “High Architectur, wondrous-vautit-rounds” [*vaulted*], which ends on an imperative note:

Admire your maker, only King of Kings.

Prais him (o man) his mervels that remarks, [marvels]

Quhais mercyis far exceids his wondrous warks. (Poem 60, ll. 12-14)

As the conspicuously-placed imperatives “Admire” and “Prais” indicate, the speaker is in full instructive mode, teaching an exclusive set of values: this is the “only King of Kings,” the only figure of authority whose countenance is worth studying.

This corrective turn accords with Montgomerie’s equation in “A Godly Prayer” of the poet and the prophet: “Help holy Ghost, and be Montgomeries muse” (Poem 4, l. 50). The speaker concludes his request by retracting his “former foolish fictiouns” (Poem 4, l. 55). And yet, just as Chaucer selects from his literary corpus those divine works which are worthy of preservation (*Canterbury Tales* X.1088), so Montgomerie’s speaker finds room for written discourse in his heavenly turn. As in the “Supreme Essence,” where the speaker asks God to “Teich me thy treuth” (Poem 59, l. 12), the relationship between master and apprentice in “A godly Prayer” (Poem 4) is spiritualized. Having been too “abash’d” to show his face to God, the poet looks up:

I pray the then thy promise to perfyte	[<i>perfect</i>]
In me, and I shall with the Psalmist say	[<i>attempt</i>]
To pen thy prais and wondrous works indyte. (Poem 4, ll. 9, 38-39) [<i>compose</i>]	

The enjambment and alliteration convey growing assurance and power. Similar energies accumulate in the following stanza:

Suppose I slyde, let me not sleep in sleuth,	
In stinking sty with Satans sinfull swyn	[<i>swine</i>]
Bot mak my Tongue the Trompet of thy treuth	
And lend my Verse sik wings as ar divyne.	
Sen thou has grantit me so good Ingyn	[<i>Since</i>]
To Loif the, Lord, in gallant style and gay	[<i>Praise</i>]
Let me no moir so trim a talent tyne.	
Peccavi Pater, miserere mei. (Poem 4, ll. 41-48)	

Anticipating Milton's concerns in "When I consider how my light is spent," Montgomerie's speaker pledges his poetic gifts (168; Matt. 25:14-30). Rather than leaving his poetry behind, therefore, Montgomerie adapts it to the system of values which his religious verse promotes. Here is an alternate remedy to his "fathers sword" (as above, p. 20).

In the same way that poetry approaches the heavenly realm in Montgomerie's verse, so too the form of one of his most impressive lyrics, the sonnet "Supreme Essence," is closely aligned with its religious subject. Thematically but also formally, this sonnet captures the object

of its speaker's celebration, the "Trinall ane" [*one*] (2). This object thus takes greater prominence than it does in either the very similar piece in James Melville's *A Morning Vision* (1598), or what may have been the model for both Scots versions, a sonnet by the Huguenot Marin Le Saulx in *Theanthropogamie* (1577). Montgomerie's sonnet, for example, emphasizes substantives to a greater degree than either of the poems by Melville and Le Saulx:

Supreme Essence, beginning Unbegun,
 Ay Trinall ane, ane undevydit thrie,
 Eternall Word wha Victorie has wun
 Ou'r Death, ou'r hell Triumphant on the Trie,
 Forknaulege, Wisdome and All-seing ee,
 JEHOVAH, ALPHA, and OMEGA all,
 Lyk unto nane, nor nane lyk unto thee,
 Unmov't wha movis the rounds about the Ball,
 Contener unconteind, is, was and sall
 Be Sempiternall, Mercifull and Just,
 Creator, uncreatit, nou I call.
 Teich me thy treuth since into thee I trust.
 Incres, confirme, and kendill from above
 My faith, my hope, bot by the lave my Love. (Poem 59) [*rest*]

Whereas Melville and Le Saulx respectively use the epithet "Distinguished" (l. 2) and "*Distinctement*" (145) to describe the "Supreme Essence", Montgomerie's qualifier "Trinall"

does not stray from its subject, the Trinity. Melville's sonnet opens with what is arguably a series of substantives but departs from the cumulative force of this repetition in lines which occur later in Montgomerie's version of the poem: "Like unto none, nor none like unto Three; / Container, uncontain'd, is, was, salbe, / In gudnes, strength, and wisdom infinite" (ll. 4-6). Where Melville's speaker qualifies the object of his praise with epithets, the enumeration of substantives in Montgomerie's sonnet continues for several lines, so that the "Supreme Essence" invoked at the outset of the poem assumes a number of different, and yet equivalent, manifestations (Poem 59, ll. 4-6, 7-8). Many of Montgomerie's epithets which are found in pairs such as "beginning Unbegun," "Trinall ane," "undevydit three," "Contener unconteind," and "Creator, uncreatit" capture the paradoxical nature of the poem's topic. In Le Saulx's sonnet, on the other hand, epithets abound for the purposes of qualification: the speaker praises the "*Createur souverain du grand tout admirable*" ["Sovereign creator of the all admirable whole"], the "*Immortel, infiny, Eternel Dieu par soy / Du monde passager l'inviolable Loy*" ["Immortal, infinite, Eternal God who foresaw / Of the changing world the inviolable Law"], so that the French version of the poem derives its rhetorical force from adjectival enhancers: "*Tout bo[n], tout saint, tout pur, tout gra[n]d, tout i[n]effable, / Tout puissant eternel à qui nul n'est semblable*" ["All good, all holy, all pure, all great, all ineffable, / All powerful, of whom there is no likeness"].⁴ Melville follows Le Saulx's example in this respect, as in a line which has no counterpart in Montgomerie's poem and which asserts that the "Supreame Essence" is "In gudnes, strength, and wisdom infinite" (l. 6). Melville seeks to enhance his subject by means of epithets, describing "Jehovah, Alpha and Omega" as "sweete" (l. 11), whereas Montgomerie recognizes that his topic cannot be qualified, that "IEHOVAH, ALPHA, and OMEGA" are simply "all" (Poem 59, l. 6). In addition to using substantives, Montgomerie draws attention to the essential nature of the Trinity by

⁴ Translations from Le Saulx are the author's.

means of enjambment as well in the lines “Contener, unconteind, is, was and sall / Be Sempiternall, Mercifull and Just” (Poem 59, 9-10), so that the “Supreme Essence” subsumes, rather than displays, these characteristics.

To a far greater extent than either of the other versions of the poem, therefore, the “Supreme Essence” corresponds to the essence it seeks to express. Certainly its syntax reflects the Trinitarian paradox more effectively than either Melville’s or Le Saulx’s poem, particularly in its use of triplets. By means of insistently tripartite structures, Montgomerie achieves a contained equilibrium which reflects his theme. The opening lines of Montgomerie’s poem are each divided into three compartments, the first instance of the parallelism which emerges in various forms throughout the sonnet (Poem 59, ll. 4, 5, 9, 10), culminating in the use of *vers rapportés* in its conclusion: “Inces, confirme, and kendill from aboue / My faith, my hope, bot by the lave my Loue” (Poem 59, ll. 13-14). Balance remains paradoxical in Montgomerie’s poem, however, so that Melville’s appositional phrase “beginner, unbegon” (l. 1), is replaced by the syntactically tighter complementation of participles “beginning Unbegun,” an “undevydit” unit. In the process Montgomerie does not merely associate God with genesis but rather suggests that He is the creative principle itself. The “Supreme Essence” “is, was and sall / Be” (Poem 59, ll. 9-10), an encompassing force which Montgomerie renders stylistically in a line such as “Ay Trinall ane, ane undevydit thrie,” where the word “ane,” like the Alpha and the Omega, is situated both at the beginning of one phrase and at the end of the other (Poem 59, l. 2). The same sentence structure can be found in such lines as “Lyk unto nane, nor nane lyk unto the” and “Unmov’t wha movis,” a syntax which captures God’s paradoxical nature, as the “Contener unconteind” (Poem 59, ll. 7, 8, 9).

Form and content in “Supreme Essence” coalesce in significant ways, for Montgomerie’s poem enacts the balance of paradoxical elements which its subject embodies. The sonnet conjoins formal elements which are both contained, like iambic pentameter, and uncontained, like enjambment. Montgomerie’s poem might even be described as an extended case of enjambment, for each of the substantives which abound in the sonnet elaborates on, and may even be equivalent to, the first object of the speaker’s appeal, the “Supreme Essence.” The first complete sentence of the sonnet comprises eleven lines of verse, concluding, despite the expansiveness which it produces, in the same way that it opens, with the speaker’s invocation: “Creator, uncreatit, now I call” (Poem 59, l. 11). Uncontainedness is thus balanced by its opposite, as is also the case in the relationship between subject and object at several junctures in the poem. While “Eternall Word” is the subject of “hes wun” in the third line of the poem, it also governs the present participial clause, “Triumphing on the Trie,” which concludes the line which follows (Poem 59, ll. 3, 4). The phrase “ou’r death, o’ur hell” may be the object of either “hes wun” or “Triumphing,” or both. In the lines “Contener unconteind, is was and sall / Be Sempiternall, Mercifull and Just,” the verb “is” might govern simultaneously the phrase “Contener unconteind” and the triplet which follows it (Poem 59, ll. 9-10). The same double structure can be found in the poet’s invocation, “Creator, uncreatit, now I call,” for it is not clear whether the speaker is addressing the “Supreme Essence” of the beginning of the poem, or one of its subsequent manifestations, or simply the “Creator,” or the “uncreatit,” or all of these at once. Montgomerie’s poem thus combines apparently counter-productive aspects of form in order to capture the paradoxical nature of its topic, with the result that his sonnet more dynamically resembles the “Contener unconteind” than do its Scots and French counterparts.

From the perspective of a reader of the twenty-first century, Montgomerie’s “Supreme

Essence” engages in an ongoing dialogue with its counterparts by his Protestant contemporaries Le Saulx and Melville. This dialogue extends further to include figures from pre-Reformation Scots literary tradition. Montgomerie is indebted, for instance, to Gavin Douglas’s Prologue to Book Ten of his *Eneados*. Included in the first part of the Bannatyne Manuscript (c.1568), which “concernis godis gloir [*glory*] and our [*our*] saluatioun” (59),⁵ Douglas’s Prologue remained current into the reign of James VI. In his headnote to his text of the Prologue, George Bannatyne identifies its theme to be “of godis [*God’s*] workis to be incomprehensible / Be man wit or ressonne as for example of the trinitie” (f. 9r). In his Prologue, Douglas considers the divine nature of the Trinity in terms which anticipate Montgomerie’s sonnet: “Thy maist supreme indivisible substance, / In ane natur, thre personis, but discrepance, [*without difference*] / Rignand eterne, ressavis nane accidence” [*Ruling eternally, accrues no accidental quality*] (ll. 21-23). In the same way that the syntax of Montgomerie’s poem expands to accommodate its topic, the Trinitarian paradox is expressed formally in Douglas’s verse. Balance is achieved, for instance, in the joining together of seemingly contradictory ideas. God “not makis, creatis, bot ingeneris [*engenders*] always,” and exists in “ane persone, and thre personis all ane” (ll. 43, 29), while

The Sone the self thing with the Fader is;
 The self substance the Holie Gaist, I wiss,
 Is with thame baith; (ll. 31-33)

Douglas draws attention to what Montgomerie would describe as God’s contained uncontainedness, for in these lines the agreement between “is” and the subject “The Sone” spans

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from the Prologue to Book X of *Eneados* are taken from Fox and Ringler’s edition of the Bannatyne Manuscript and line numbers identified. The source for quotations from other parts of Douglas’s text will be indicated by means of reference to the page numbers in Coldwell’s edition of the *Eneados*.

the entire verse line, while the indicative verb resurfaces at the beginning of the third line of the stanza with reference to “the Holie Gaist.” Montgomerie’s imitation of the tenth prologue of the *Eneados* extends beyond its theological argument – and beyond “Supreme Essence” – to the spiritual impulses underlying the making of poetry itself. Douglas beseeches God “frome the begynning and end be of [his] muse” (l. 151), thus anticipating the poet-prophet’s appeal for inspiration in Montgomerie’s “A Godly Prayer” (Poem 4). God’s creation is mirrored in the poet’s task – “I wirschep nowdir ydoll, stok, nor elf [*I worship neither idol, image, or pagan deity*], / Thocht furth I wryt, so as myne auctor duse” (ll. 154-155) – so that in the Prologue to Book One of the *Eneados* the speaker, while acknowledging his indebtedness to “Maist reuerend Virgill, of Latyn poetis prynce” (3) and implicitly locating himself alongside vernacular poets such as Chaucer (12-13), concludes by turning to “Afald [*single*] godhed, ay lestyng [*ever lasting*] but discrepans, / In personys thre, equale, of a substans” (16). In directing his “poetry toward “that Prynce, that hevynly Orpheus, / Grond of all gude, our Saluyour [*Saviour*] Ihesus” (16), Douglas effects the spiritual turn which is later seen in Montgomerie’s verse where literary values are also oriented towards the heavenly spheres.

In drawing closer parallels between “Supreme Essence” and the Prologue to Book Ten of the *Eneados*, however, evidence emerges that Montgomerie is working to reframe Douglas’s particular attention therein to ineffability. Douglas writes in a cogitative mode, drawing out the response of an implied interlocutor by means of phrases such as “For quhy?” and “I wis” (24, 32) and clarifying his topic by adducing analogies from nature and human society. Douglas recognizes, however, the limitations of such “rud exampillis and figuris” (l. 83). He notes that human argument is an insufficient means of understanding the Trinitarian paradox:

Friend, ferly not, na caus is to complene,	[<i>wonder not</i>]
Albeit thy wyt grit God may nocht attene;	[<i>not attain</i>]
For, micht thow comprehend be thyne engyne	[<i>if you might</i>]
The maist excellent maiestie devyne,	
He micht be reput ane pretty God and mene. (ll. 86-90)	[<i>reckoned; petty</i>]

With reason frustrated, “It sufeis the [*that you*] beleif the creid perfyte” (l. 95). As if encapsulating Douglas’s extended critique of the human incapacity to understand God, Montgomerie abandons theological argument in “Supreme Essence” and turns instead to the poetry itself: the equivalence between form and content in Montgomerie’s sonnet provides a correlative to the “creid perfyte.” Where Douglas devotes several lines to the mysteries of the Trinity (ll. 21-23, 29-30, 31-35, 61-65) and of God’s own creation (ll. 38-45, 46, 57-59, 81-82), Montgomerie concisely addresses “Ay Trinall ane, ane undevydit thrie” and “Creator, uncreatit” (Poem 59, ll. 2, 11). The Incarnation and the Redemption are celebrated at length in Douglas’s Prologue (ll. 106-140), whereas Montgomerie addresses them in two lines (Poem 59, ll. 3-4) as integral aspects of the “Supreme Essence” rather than as discrete theological points. Douglas asserts that

God is, I grant, in all thing, not excludit;	[<i>excluded</i>]
Gevis all gudnes, and is of nocht denudit;	[<i>Bestows; nothing; deprived</i>]
Of him has all thing pairt, and he not mynneist;	[<i>has; not diminished</i>]
Haill he is alquhair, not devydit nor fynneist	[<i>Whole; everywhere; enclosed</i>]
Without all thing he is, and not excludit. (ll. 96-100)	

but he struggles to express his topic effectively before exclaiming, “O Lord, thy wayis bene investigable” (l. 101). The mental block which Douglas adumbrates Montgomerie distils into the brief paradox “Contener unconteind” (Poem 59, l. 9). Recognising with Douglas and Bannatyne that the topic lies beyond “man or resone,” Montgomerie seeks to represent God’s divinity not discursively but rather by a figure that represents the failure of reason confronted by the uncontainable.

Montgomerie’s dialogue with Douglas and Bannatyne presents a powerful alternative to the rancorous disengagement with which “To his Majestie for his Pensioun” concludes. It is an alternative that is strongly grounded in the making and transmission of literary heritage. For instance, on the title-page of Henry Charteris’s 1569/1570 quarto edition of Robert Henryson’s *Fables*, the second of two epigraphs reads as follows: “*Vt Naufragij leuamen est Portus, Ita Tranquillitas animi, seu Iucunditas, est quasi Vitae Portus*” [“Just as the harbour is the consolation of the shipwreck, so tranquillity of mind, or happiness, is as it were the harbour of life”] (Fox *Henryson* liii).⁶ Although no exact source has been identified for this passage, it might be described as Ciceronian in character, for *naufragium* is “standard Ciceronian vernacular for the victims of civil unrest” while *portus* is a “favourite trope” of Cicero’s (Manolaraki 382; Lewis and Short, “naufragium”). The values presented can also be found, for instance, in his *De Amicitia* where “*honestas, Gloria, tranquillitas animi atque iucunditas*” [“honour and fame and delightful tranquillity of mind”] are, along with “*virtuti opera*” [“virtue”], to be sought after in life (Warmington 84).⁷ That Charteris should offer this quotation as a portal to his edition of Henryson’s *Fables* is significant, for it indicates a connection, for some readers during the reign

⁶ For the translation, see Macdonald “Volusenus” 124, n.21.

⁷ For the translation, see Warmington, ed. and Falconer, trans., p. 191.

of James VI at least, between Henryson's *Fables* and tranquillity in a time of tempest and shipwreck. Charteris's epigraph points up the twin pattern of desperate opposition and of refocused resolution which also features in Montgomerie's poetry. Although "ill guyding [*living*] genders mony [*many*] gees [*black moods*] / And specially in Poets" (Poem 68, I, ll. 9-10), the embittered, critical distance which is sought in Montgomerie's verse is moderated by the compromise which underlies literary dialogue, linking back to Henryson, Douglas and Bannatyne, but also forward to the generation of William Alexander and William Drummond of Hawthornden. This ongoing pattern of opposition and reconciliation in Scottish poetry also deserves to be considered within the context of political and religious ideology: tranquillity of mind was a topic which attracted considerable contemporary interest in the sixteenth century and, in the case of the Scottish scholar Florentius Volusenus, involved developing an "eirenical, inclusive humanist position" with regards to the doctrinal controversies of the period (MacDonald 125, 128). The tranquillity of mind which is achieved in compromise thus constitutes a dynamic but also preservative aspect of Scottish culture in the reign of James VI, whether in Volusenus's negotiation of ideological debate or in poetry as envisioned and practised by Montgomerie.

CHAPTER TWO

“EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN wes my name”: Self and Space in Jacobean Scotland

Early in Margaret Ker's manuscript collection of poems by the late sixteenth-century Scottish poet Alexander Montgomerie, there appears a sequence of admonitory lyrics. These lyrics give way increasingly to vehement attacks against Fortune. Penultimate in this sequence, “The Poets Complaint of his Nativitie,” presents a series of bitterly rhetorical questions directed at the “Hevins”, those “hinderers” of the poet’s “hap” [*fortune*] (Poem 10, l. 1) whose interference is recurrently emphasized in the refrain of the poem (Poem 10, ll. 1, 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49). Formal invention appears to be providing the poet a means to declare his affiliation to a defined literary tradition while expressing his alienation from the courtly arena in which that affiliation might be expected to assure success. The speaker bitterly considers his plight in a series of questions which multiply from two in the first stanza to six in each of the second and the third. Through his extended use of anaphora Montgomerie gives vent to a list of resentments. Complaint acquires cumulative force through enjambement, with only one exception. In the fifth stanza of the poem is a verse line which comes to a full stop, signalling a change in direction:

Quhy wes I nurisht with the Noble Nymphs?

Quhy wes I fostred for to flie with fame?

For drinking of these Ladyis hallowit lymphs [*sacred springs*]

EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN wes my name.

Quhy did Apollo Poet me proclame?

To cleith my heid with his grene laurel Cap

[*clothe*]

Since that the Hevins ar hinderers of my hap. (Poem 10, ll. 29-35)

The “conflicting signals” which enjambement produces earlier on in the poem heighten readerly tension (Preminger and Brogan 359) and thus make the above deviation from that formal pattern all the more arresting. The fifth stanza of the poem represents a rare moment of pause which offsets the force of the speaker’s complaint: the framing of an anagram itself becomes a lesson in self-containment. In the anagrammatic deployment of his name Montgomerie recomposes and recreates himself, self-assertion which is made all the more forceful in its contrast to the questioning pose which the speaker strikes throughout the rest of the poem. It is significant that at the end of the previous stanza Montgomerie should refer to that “goldin grave Ingyne” which established his reputation “for Invention and for uttrance apt” (Poem 10, ll. 26, 27). In “The Poets Complaint of his Nativitie” inventiveness with form becomes a way for a poet once “EXTOLD” to acquire new life and to assert his name in new places. The poise and counterpoise of Montgomerie’s poem reflects the ebb and flow of a life attended simultaneously by fortunes and misfortunes, so that the writing of poetry becomes a way of picking up the pieces and shaping a new life, from its “Nativitie” onward.

The name of another and later poet would appear in conspicuous places as well: inclined to retreat and self-reflection, the king’s lord chancellor Alexander Seton is referred to in a Latin inscription on the garden wall of his house at Pinkie and which is quoted above (p.13; Bath, *Decorative* 80). The monogram of Seton and his third wife Margaret Hay appears multiple times in the Prefects’ Room of Pinkie House, while in the middle of the painted ceiling in the long gallery are the initials “AED” (Bath, *Decorative* 231, 235). Nor does the chancellor’s personal

touch stop there but can also be felt in the emblems which are displayed across the entirety of this impressive ceiling. A comparison of this space with that of Montgomerie's poetry is well rewarded. In the same way that Montgomerie uses "Invention" (Poem 10, l. 13) – including the allusive reworking of letters themselves – to affirm a place for himself within his poem, so in a highly personal and distinctive way Seton combines and recombines not just elements of an established European emblem tradition but those from Scottish literary culture as well.

Although Alexander Montgomerie and Alexander Seton appear to follow contrasting biographical paths, each uses literary and cultural space for the assertion of cherished values, albeit to strikingly different degrees. At one time a favorite of the king's, Alexander Montgomerie experienced a reversal in fortune (as above, pp. 9-11) which he would describe as a "Tragedie" (Poem 64, IV, l. 6) in the sonnets that he wrote to James VI regarding his pension. Montgomerie's fortunes took a turn for the worse, however, as he eventually found himself embroiled in a long period of litigation – in which his cause ultimately failed – and suspected of Catholic sympathies. He was outlawed on 14 July 1597 and died in the following year, to be buried not where his father lay but in Canongate Kirk, outside the walls of Edinburgh (Jack 2004; Lyall, *Montgomerie* 63-117, 161-94.). In the same year Alexander Seton was accorded a place in Parliament and made provost of Edinburgh, a position which he would hold for ten years. In spite of his strongly Catholic background, Alexander Seton (1556-1622) undertook a political career in an increasingly presbyterian climate and achieved success through moderation. Although never entirely free of the kirk's suspicion, Seton conformed outwardly to the official church of Scotland. He became lord chancellor in 1604 a year after the Union of the Crowns and, rather than following the king south, administered from Edinburgh. While deeply involved in political affairs, Seton, noted for his humanist learning, was inclined to contemplation and

reflective neo-Stoicism (Allan, “A Commendation” 67-69; Allan, *Philosophy* 109-10). Rather than following Montgomerie in bidding “Adeu” to “King, Court, Cuntrey, and kin” (Poem 68, IV, l. 1), Seton balanced Senecan retreat with a Ciceronian commitment to public life. He died at home at Pinkie House in Musselburgh on 16 June 1622 (Lee 2004; as above, p.12).

In important respects, key features of the house embody the values of its owner. In drawing attention to fountains at Pinkie House, for instance, Seton suggests his own affiliation with the values they represent. In addition to the prominent Doric fountain at the entrance of Pinkie House, Seton’s *villa suburbana* is itself, as the inscription on its garden wall attests, “a fountain of pure water,” designed for the cultivation of *humanitas* and *urbanitas* (trans. Howard 51; Bath, *Decorative* 100). In entering the house and ascending the staircase to the long gallery on the second floor, one discovers a third fountain, this time featured in one of the many emblems which decorate Seton’s magnificent ceiling. In the foreground of this emblem the king’s chancellor is standing by a fountain from which he is filling a cup of water. He exemplifies the moderation which the greedy man, who has fallen into the river behind, lacks and which is embodied in the emblem’s motto: “*Nihil amplius opto*,” or “I wish for nothing more” (Bath, *Decorative* 81). As Michael Bath notes, this emblem closely follows an engraving in Otto van Veen’s early seventeenth-century *Emblemata Horatiana* which is based on one of Horace’s *Satires* and features Temperance with her two vessels (*Decorative* 81). In the same way that fountains are placed in physical and conceptual relation to each other at Pinkie House, so Seton inserts himself into the discursive space of van Veen’s emblem and shares in the values contained therein.

Implicit in this first emblem is a familiar distinction between the upright and the fallen man which can be found, among other places, in the First Psalm. In Alexander Montgomerie’s

translation, the “blissed” man (Poem 1, l. 2) by means of God’s grace “stands not in / The way of sin / Nor does begin / To sitt with mockers in the scornfull sait [*seat*]” (Poem 1, ll. 5-8). Like the man in the Pinkie emblem who is being swept away by the river, the “godles men” are “as the chaffe or sand / Quhilk day by day / Winds dryvis away” (Poem 1, ll. 20-22). Moral rectitude is rendered by images of the just rising and standing straight: “The wicked in the judgment shall not stand / Nor sinners ryse na mair [*no more*] Whom god disdanes / In the Assembly where The just remanes” (Poem 1, ll. 24-26; as above, p. 17). The word “stand” makes an emphatic second appearance in Montgomerie’s version of the First Psalm, as it does in the Geneva Bible (Hammond and Adamson); it is distinct from the Latin Vulgate, where the line appears simply as “*non sic impii*” (Fischer et al. 771). It is also different from Clément Marot’s verse translation of the same, “*Parquoy sera la cause reboutée*” (60) and from its rendering in the Dhouai-Rheims edition of the Bible as “Not so the wicked, not so” (Hammond and Adamson). The verb “stand” in Scots can indicate fixity or, more specifically, the constancy needed in times of suffering or to maintain loyalty and obedience. Montgomerie’s related use of the word “remanes” thus becomes significant in this light. Moreover, other versions of the First Psalm indicate simply that the assembly belongs to the just – in the Vulgate, “*congregatione iustorum*”; in Marot, “*reng des bons*”; and in Douai-Rheims, “the council of the just” – while Montgomerie instead emphasizes the ethical stance involved in such affiliation by writing “where the just remanes.” The upright man described in the First Psalm embodies the permanence of his values. It is appropriate, therefore, that he is said to be like the tree which “plantit by the running river growis” (Poem 1, l. 13), a pose Seton adopts in the emblem at Pinkie House.

A towering figure from classical mythology is alluded to in another emblem pictured in the long gallery of Pinkie House: the motto which accompanies this image of a rock buffeted by the four winds – “*Stat cunctis immota minis*,” or “It stands unmoved by every threat” – is drawn from the scene in the *Thebaid* which features one of the “Seven Against Thebes,” Hippomedon, as he prepares for battle (Bath, *Decorative* 232). Although original in its choice of motto, the Pinkie emblem is commonplace. It appears in Whitney’s *A Choice of Emblemes* (1586) and closely resembles a familiar image from Andreas Alciato’s emblem books in which a tree is depicted withstanding violent winds, aptly instancing the motto “*Firmissima convelli non posse*,” or “The firmest things cannot be uprooted” (Bath, *Decorative* 232; Alciato 1534). Seton’s temperate man comes to mind here, as does Montgomerie’s sonnet to Lily Ruthven, where she is depicted as the “first of flowers” and a “staitly stalk” which “so streight up is and stay” (Poem 74, ll. 1-2).

Assuming the same posture as this “staitly stalk” is the rock which figures in Montgomerie’s lyric “MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR.” It begins with what Roderick J. Lyall describes as “the familiar amatory psychomachia” (*Montgomerie* 269) wherein the confrontation between Melancholie and Pleasure, with each of their attendant forces, is depicted. The second section of the poem is less conventional than the first, despite opening with the following proverbial opposition: “The rendring reid which bows with everie blast / In stormis bot stoupis when strongest treis Ar to the ground douncast” (Poem 34, ll. 31-32). Greater still in the speaker’s estimation, however, is the rock, for it remains firm and fast in the midst of raging storms (Poem 34, ll. 34-37). As the speaker declares, “Quhat reks then of [*Of what matter then is*] the reid, Or of the trees what reks? / The Rok remanes a Rok indeid, Quhilk nather [*Which*

neither] bows nor breks” (Poem 34, ll. 37-38). The rock here is an emblem of patience, as Montgomerie’s speaker makes clear:

So shall my harte

With patient parte

Remane

A rok all rigour to resist, [*harshness*]

And shall not start

To suffer smart

For ane

Quhom to obey I count me blist. (Poem 34, ll. 39-46)

In the brief steps traced by the cut-short verse line Montgomerie’s rock expresses more than just patient endurance, however, but also virtuous obedience: the words “Remane and “blist,” for instance, recall the language of the First Psalm. Although at first said never to bow or to break, the rock ends up being not too different from the “rendring reid” with which the second section of the poem opens, since its speaker submits himself to, or bends before, his beloved. There is a complex figural layering at work in “MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR,” since Montgomerie is working within different, yet overlapping, conceptual modes. The speaker’s experience can be expressed with reference to the allegorical scene with which the poem opens, to the difference between the reed and the oak, to the further distinction which is made between them and the rock and, particularly given the way the image of the rock is itself complicated

within the context of the poem to evoke a kind of constancy that is at once yielding and unyielding.

In considering how “MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR” might be connected to Montgomerie’s other poems, it is worth pausing for a moment to revisit Seton’s ceiling. A third emblem from Pinkie House depicts the Greek wrestler Milo twice in the same frame, carrying a calf as a young man and bearing an ox on his shoulders in adulthood. The motto which accompanies the emblem is “*A teneris adsuesce labori,*” or “Accustom yourself to hard work from your earliest years.” As Bath shows, both this image and its accompanying motto derive from Denis de Lebey de Batilly’s *Emblemata* of 1596 (*Decorative* 231), where the Latin *subscriptio* urges the reader to learn strength under pressure, with the final line, “*Porro te nullum debilitabit onus*” or “In the future no burden will weaken you.” There are a number of contexts within which this emblem can be studied: in the Skelmorlie Aisle in Largs, for instance, Fortitude is given the motto “Strong in adversity and showing a brave heart, with unbroken spirit I shoulder every burden” (trans. Bath, *Decorative* 132) while similar ideas are expressed in the embroidery of Mary Queen of Scots, such as the emblem which is recorded on the Bed of State and which features a familiar palm tree with the motto “*Ponderibus virtus innata resistit*” or “Innate virtue resists oppression” (trans. Bath, *Emblems* 26).

The burdened Milo depicted in Seton’s long gallery also calls to mind imagery of a similar kind in Montgomerie’s verse. The recurrently atrophying marsh marigold in “Lyk as the dum / Solsequium,” for instance, provides just such a parallel. Montgomerie’s heliotropic flower rises only when the sun is in sight and otherwise “Hings down his head / And droups as dead” (Poem 21, ll. 5-6). Likewise with the speaker, who “lout[s]” (Poem 21, l. 46), or bows, when his beloved is not near. As in “MELANCHOLIE” (as discussed above, pp. 38-39) the act of

stooping is not necessarily degrading, as can be seen in the religious lyric “A godly Prayer,” where the speaker’s profession of faith involves total submission to God:

Stoup stubborne stomock that has bene so stout,
Stoup filthie flesh and carioun of clay,
Stoup hardnit hairt befor the Lord and lout,
Stoup, stoup in tyme, defer not day by day. (Poem 4.57-60)

The “blissed” man is thus an obedient man, bowing to spiritual authority at the same time as he virtuously stands tall, like the tree which grows by the river.

Both stances are found in Montgomerie’s poem to the “staitly stalk,” Lily Ruthven: while she stands tall, the rest “ay lowly lowts and cowers / As bund [*bound*] so brave a beauty to obey” (Poem 74, ll. 3-4). There is no shame in submission of this kind for it suggests that, before such perfection, homage is entirely appropriate: “That who persaivis [*perceives*] thy Excellence by ours / Must love the Lillie as the first of flours” (Poem 74, ll. 13-14). Moreover, in the same way that the “laive” [*rest*] do honour to Lily Ruthven, this scriptural paragon of flowers returns the favour, for her “blisfull beams with beutie burnisht bright / So honours all the Gardein where thou growis” (Poem 74, ll.9-10). Those who remain in the company of the just stand tall by means of grace: the “blissed man” is supported by the Rock of true faith (Poem 1, l. 20). Fixity also indicates spiritual resolve in another religious poem by Montgomerie, “The Poets Dreame.” Here the speaker strives to make his faith “fast” and expresses his determination with the following proverbial image:

As raynie dropis do peirce the flint
 Throu falling oft and not throu dint, [impact]
 Of hope if thou hold fast the hint [opportunity]
 Thou shall prevail at last. (Poem 3, ll. 21-24)

While the constant dropping illustrated in the above passage is used to express spiritual fortitude, the second part of the analogy also illuminates the speaker's situation, for a hardened heart must be softened, or, as in "A godly Prayer" must stoop, in order to receive God's grace.

The verbal and conceptual parallels which can be identified between a number of Montgomerie's religious lyrics and "MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR" might therefore lead us to regard the latter work in a more serious light than its placement among the poet's amatory verse otherwise suggests. That James VI in his poetical treatise *Reulis and Cautelis to be Observit and Eschewit in Scottish Poesie* should cite Montgomerie's "Before the Greeks durst enterpryse" as an example of verse dealing with "materis of love" indicates that ostensibly different topics – love, politics, and religion, for instance – can be applied interchangeably and polyvalently in various genres (37; Lyall, *Montgomerie* 114-15). In "MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR," the image of the heart twice expresses the same idea. It first appears as the impenetrable material from which Constancy makes his shield (Poem 34, ll. 23-26). Later, the speaker's loyalty remains steadfast even though he rather amusingly imagines he has a hundred thousand hearts pierced by as many darts (Poem 34, ll. 47-60). But when compared to its first application, the image of the heart as it appears a second time perhaps becomes less straightforwardly hyperbolic and even spiritually evocative. Indeed, what appears to be an offhand rhyme with which the same poem concludes "Quhais [*Whose*] Angels ees [*eyes*] nicht

ay, I think, / Revive me with a wink” (Poem 34, ll. 59-60) – finds a more serious counterpart in Robert Henryson’s *Orpheus and Eurydice*, where Orpheus, taking pity on the thirsting Tantalus, “tuk his harp and fast on it can clink. / The wattir stud [*stood still*] and Tantalus gat drink” (ll. 287-88). When studied within a larger literary context – whether that of Montgomerie’s poetic corpus or of Scots literary tradition – several motifs in Montgomerie’s “MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR” can be understood in spiritual terms, since to “Remane” like a rock is to be “blist” in more than one of that poet’s lyrics.

In a fourth and final emblem from the long gallery at Pinkie House another burdened figure appears. It is Aeneas, depicted in a well-known scene carrying his father out of burning Troy, with his son, Ascanius, following behind (Bath, *Decorative* 232-33). While it is possible to identify in the stooping Aeneas the same ideas which Seton’s Milo has brought to mind, it is also useful to consider how this particular emblem relates to “stalk” of a new kind which can be seen in Montgomerie’s poem entitled “Yong tender plante in spring tym of your yeirs” (Poem 37). Here the “plante” is referred to as a scion of family, as the picture of fertility and, by extension, of dynastic succession (Poem 37, l. 1). Imagery of a similar kind is used in the opening of Montgomerie’s “THE NAVIGATION,” where James is hailed as “bravest burgeoun [*bud*] brekking to [*flowering into*] the Rose” whose “stalk of treuth mot [*must*] grant the nourishing” (Poem 53, ll. 1, 3). “Stalk” of various kinds are featured in a poem from the Maitland Quarto Manuscript which is entitled “Ane Consolatore Ballad to Sir Richard Maitland of Lethingtoun, Knight.” On a tone of uplift which anticipates Montgomerie’s verse, the speaker of this poem exhorts Maitland not to give into despair and reminds him that “blist ar thay dois sa thair burding beir” [*blessed are they who do bear their burden thus*] (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 45). While carrying “the cairfull croce” [*cross of suffering*] (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 26) the burdened also find support in

Christ's Redemption, resting "on him, reiosing in his rod" [*on him, rejoicing in his rule (or cross)*] (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 8). According to the poem's speaker, we "patientlie pas our this pilgrimage / be paine to perfyte plesour to proceid / In hevin, our hairbour hame and heritage" [*we patiently undertake our pilgrimage / from suffering to perfect happiness to proceed / In heaven, our harbour, home, and heritage*] (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 33-32). However, while the word "heritage" has a spiritual meaning – the inheritance of the world to come (DOST *heritage*, n.3) – it also has obvious familial associations that reinforce the poem's movement toward the idea of heredity. For example, the speaker reminds his addressee of his "kind" (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 88), of his grandfather Richard Maitland: "Greit is the gloir of your grandfatheris gud / That stoutlie stuid in money stalwart stour" [*Great is the glory of your grandfather's reputation / Who firmly stood in many a strong battle*] (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 93-94). Like Montgomerie's rock, Maitland's forbears "bitter blastis ay buir with breistis bauld" [*bitter blasts endured with courageous hearts*] and "stormis withstuid with stomak stout and stoic" [*storms withstood with stomach stout and stoic*] (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 100, 104). The speaker asserts the primacy of Maitland's "lustie linage" [*well favoured lineage*], which includes the best that ever was since "Priamis tyme of troy" [*the era of Priam of Troy*] (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 107, 110). Like Aeneas, Maitland's predecessors are described as magnanimous (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 121-22) and, again like that epic hero, are entrusted with carrying their lineage on their backs: in times of trouble the house was upheld by Maitland's forebears (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 117) and by God (Craigie, *Quarto* ll. 134, 145, 190), while within the poem's context the memory of hereditary example is intended as a great source of consolation to Maitland. A supporting foundation (DOST *stok*, n.2.c) can be found not just in God but in family as well. Maitland traces a dynastic line, drawing attention to the nuanced meaning of the word "stok," which can refer to a tree or a stem of a plant (DOST *stok*,

n.2.a) or to a kinship group (DOST *stok*, 3.a). That Seton's arms and initials should be prominently located at the apex of the *trompe l'oeil* octagonal lantern depicted in the central panel at Pinkie House, an image which is itself surrounded by a border decorated with eight heraldic devices, becomes deeply significant when one considers that Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius are also featured in the same architectural – and in this case, conceptual – space.

A study of the ceiling in the long gallery of Pinkie House encourages the perception of Seton as a kind of Ascanius, locating himself alongside not just family – Maitland is enjoined to follow his predecessors “in fourtoun and in fame” (Craigie, *Quarto* l. 120) – but following literary and cultural precedent as well. It is interesting to note what Bath has shown, namely that, while the image of Aeneas carrying his father away from Troy is commonplace, occurring with the motto “*Pietas filiorum in parentes*,” or “Honour from children toward parents,” in a number of emblem books, including Alciato's *Emblematum liber* of 1534, the visual inclusion of Ascanius in that scene is not (Bath, *Decorative* 232). In Gavin Douglas's translation of the *Aeneid*, Ascanius is described “[w]ith onmeit pays [*unequal step*] his fader fast followand [*closely following*]” (101), a verb to which the poet of the *Eneados* is also partial when evoking his relationship with his own literary father, Virgil. Poetic imitation for Douglas is indeed a matter of following, as is repeatedly evident in his First Prologue. Another familiar image is used in service of the same concept, for, as Douglas famously declares, “Quha [*That which*] is attachit ontill a staik, we se, / May go na ferthir bot wreil about that tre: / Rycht so am I to Virgillis text ybund” (11; as above, p.10). The Latin original is figured as a restraining tethering post, but also as a supporting tree. In the same way that Douglas identifies his stalk in Virgil, so Seton finds the same in a number of his literary predecessors, deriving support from the received motifs of a particular cultural tradition. And yet he also reworks those concepts in an original way, adding

the same personal touch to them as he does when, in van Veen's emblem, he is depicted as the temperate man modestly drawing water from the fountain by his side.

Seton thus creates a space for himself within an established emblem tradition. The emblem which refers to the *Aeneid* suggests, moreover, a further area in which Seton finds room for self-expression. A study of the relation between the ceiling at Pinkie House and aspects of Alexander Montgomerie's verse reveals Seton's parallel engagement with the literary culture of medieval and early modern Scotland. Nor does comparative work of this kind simply show how European emblems and Scottish literature are mutually intelligible, but also suggests a sophisticated conception of discursive space. That fountains should assume multiple forms at Pinkie House is highly significant in this regard. The humanistic values with which the fountain on the garden wall of the house is associated are further defined by the fountain's relation to temperance in van Veen's emblem. With this set of meanings in place, the Doric fountain in the courtyard of Pinkie House becomes more important than it seemed at first glance. The same dynamic exploration of space underlies Seton's painted ceiling as well. Here cultural spaces become venues for Seton to practise the invention which James VI praised so highly in his *Reulis and Cautelis*. The king's lord chancellor engages not just with a received European emblem tradition but also with Scottish literary culture, while exploring the connections between the two as well. Space is at once physical and conceptual, the latter including the body of texts written by Seton's literary predecessors, alongside whom this "lover of mankind and civilization" inscribes a place for himself in the same way that he makes room next to Aeneas and Anchises for the little Ascanius.

The way in which Seton represents himself at Pinkie House brings to mind Montgomerie's own recreation in "The Poets Complaint of his Nativitie." One outcome of

misfortune in that poem is effacement, nearly total if not for the poet's literary reputation: "EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN wes my name" (Poem 10, l. 32). What here resembles an epitaph might, however, also be regarded as a moment of rebirth, of the kind of lapidary self-assertion which looks forward to the inscription on the garden wall at Pinkie House. In the midst of troubled times Montgomerie recreates himself through invention, whether in the specific instance of an anagram or in writing poetry generally. Likewise Seton creatively engages with established cultural traditions and carves his name within them. Both European emblems and medieval and early modern Scottish literature function as spaces which become outlets for articulation in periods when venues for self-expression appear increasingly scarce. It is possible to trace each poet's response to changing – and potentially alienating – political and religious climates by studying how each engages with literary and cultural traditions received from the Continent or established at home. Montgomerie is not easily silenced and Scottish poetry becomes a stage for resistance and rebuke. Yet it also serves a recuperative function, for literary practice provides an opportunity for the poet to create a new name for himself. The emblems which decorate the ceiling at Pinkie House and the literary influences implied therein serve a quieter and sustaining value for Seton, who, with characteristic moderation, affiliates himself with the values they represent. Yet both poets find in these traditions room for self-assertion, engaging with them in highly inventive and personal ways.

CHAPTER THREE

Opposition, Reconciliation, and the Writing of Poetry in *The Cherrie and the Slae*

“The cuttit and brokin verse” of Alexander Montgomerie’s longest poem, *The Cherrie and the Slae*, was already familiar to Scottish court circles in the mid-1580s. In his *Reulis and Cautelis*, James VI used an excerpt from *The Cherrie and the Slae* to exemplify one of the verse forms best suited for “materis of love.” While the integration of amatory and political discourse was a standard feature of Renaissance poetry (as pp.42-43, above), this metamorphic conceptualization of love might best be understood in relation to invention, or what James lauds as “ane of the chief vertewis of a poet.” To invent is to transform and Montgomerie was not least among Scottish poets to explore new discursive spaces, as his most ambitious work, *The Cherrie and the Slae*, attests.

Reprinted no fewer than nineteen times between 1597 and 1757, *The Cherrie and the Slae* was a text which appeared often and in a variety of places. The Huguenot and refugee Thomas Vautrollier printed the *The Essays of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poetry* in 1584, the king’s first collection of published work and, containing the *Reulis and Cautelis*, the venue in which Montgomerie’s poem made its first appearance. *The Cherrie and the Slae* was not printed until 1597 by Robert Waldegrave, who in the same year issued a second edition of the poem, this one with revisions in the guise of corrections “be the Author himself,” although no less incomplete than the first printing (Montgomerie, II. 9). The poem addressing “materis of love” in the *Reulis and Cautelis* acquired spiritual dimensions in the canon of Montgomerie’s works which took shape posthumously, its earliest surviving record being John Wreittoun’s printed edition of 1636. Based on the text of a now lost print issued by Andrew Hart in 1615, this edition

represents the earliest extant copy of the second version of the poem, which seeks to resolve the unsatisfactoriness of the first by revising and significantly expanding it. However, the anthology within which it was included represents a “restricted, even distorted group” (Montgomerie, II.10) which characterizes Montgomerie as a religious poet and a dour one at that, as suggests the inclusion of a ballad-meter quatrain in which Psalm 37:27 is rendered as “Leave sin ere sin leave thee, doe good, / And both without delay.” As David Parkinson notes, “Eroticism and indeed Catholicism having been obscured in his printed canon, Montgomerie has come to epitomise godly disposition to the daily round of worship as the grounding for reflection and action” (“Montgomerie” 499). Alternate readings of *The Cherrie and the Slae* nevertheless persisted in other corners of Europe, as the Latin translation of the poem which was produced by Thomas Duff O.S.B, first printed in Würzburg in 1631, and reprinted in 1696, suggests (Dilworth 77; Lyall, *Montgomerie* 33-36, 191-93). At once volatile and yet remarkably always the same, Montgomerie’s poem occupies a number of different religious, political and cultural spaces within its publication history.

The reinvention which *The Cherrie and the Slae* underwent in its second version is evident in comparing the corrected 1597 edition with Wreittoun’s 1636 print. In his use of the springtime setting associated with dream-vision poetry Montgomerie follows Chaucerian precedent and, moving closer to home, such texts as Gavin Douglas’s *The Palice of Honoure*, which was completed in 1500 or 1501 and reprinted in 1579. In Douglas’s poem the speaker walks through a beautiful garden and “hevinly place” (l. 55) before falling into a trance, at which point he finds himself in a “deserte terrybill” where there is a river “With brayis bare [*steep banks*], raif rochis [*overhanging rocks*] lyke to fall, / Quhareon [*Upon which*] na gers [*grass*] nor herbys [*herbs*] wer visibyll, / Bot skauppis brynt with blastis boryall” [*Bot instead, rocky knolls*

parched by northern winds] (ll. 142-44). This abrupt change in scene and tone reflects the paradoxical experience of Fortune and Love (Bawcutt, *Gavin* 53). The dreamer inveighs against Venus and is rebuked for his blasphemy, at which point in the poem he undertakes the educational journey typical of dream-allegories. Signs of trouble are present early on in Montgomerie's poem as well. Setting and narrative are more closely integrated in the second version of the poem, for in accentuating the sinister elements of the landscape in which Montgomerie's speaker finds himself, the 1636 text anticipates his beguilement and fall at the hands of Cupid. Montgomerie's use of bird lore is unusual, for while in the first version of the poem the generic catalogue of birds yields to a description of the pleasant springtime setting, in the second version Philomela is isolated from the group and the grisly myth associated with her is recounted to heighten the nightmarish overtones of the scene (Poem 101.7-14).⁸ A hellish cacophony ensues in which "The Cushat crouds [*wood-pigeon coos*], the Corbie [*raven*] cries, / The Cuckow couks [*cuckoo calls*], the prattling Pyes [*chattering magpies*] / To geck [*taunt*] her they begin" (101.15-17). The speaker is deafened by the din of the "iangling layes, / The craiking Crawes, the keckling Kayes" [*the jangling Jays, the croaking Crows, the cackling Jackdaws*], not to mention that of a wailing Turtledove or of Echo who relates over and over again the fall of Narcissus (101.23-28). The seeds of the action which will follow are already planted within the first few stanzas of Montgomerie's poem, for its dreamer will pick up Cupid's wings and, like another figure of Greek myth, will fly briefly before plummeting from on high. Birds in the second version of *The Cherrie and the Slae* convey a foreboding, recurrent disharmony as Montgomerie's transformation of generic motifs are integrated into the dramatic action of the poem.

⁸ For the remainder of this chapter, poem and line numbers for *The Cherrie and the Slae* will be referred to in short form.

Where the dreamer of *The Palace of Honour* is rebuked for his ignorant offence and is educated by a journey through various allegorical courts – Honour's the highmost of them – Montgomerie's poem instead turns inward. The "desert terrybill" (l. 136) of Douglas's text is transformed into the wasteland of the tormented self. A debate is initiated between Dread, Danger and Despair, on the one hand, and Courage on the other. Like that of the Choice of Hercules, its central question is whether to aspire for a lofty goal or to settle for easy contentment. According to Courage, the rewards of fame and honour outweigh the risks involved in seeking the inaccessible cherry, while the voices opposing him argue that the danger is too great and that the speaker should check his hasty desire and settle for the time being for the more available, less refreshing sloe berry (101.365-522). The opposition of the poem's title is quickly expanded into a larger polarization of allegorical figures, with a debate ensuing as to which of either camp is more perilous to follow (101.522ff). Then Experience arrives with Reason, Wit and Skill and "all ask at Will" (101.607). In the long sequence which follows, these personifications contend with one another, while also reviewing the action of the poem thus far and working out the role each of them must now play in it. Complications ensue. At first aligned against Danger (101.522-88), Hope is later on less favourably represented as beguiling the speaker, putting "hast" [*hastiness*] into his head which boils his "barmie [*fanciful*] braine" (101.1281, 82). Characters which had removed themselves from the stage (101.603) appear again in the guise of witnesses: Danger attests to Will's hastiness in the initial episode of the poem (101.687). And after what appears to be a definite moment of transition when the speaker finally uses his own voice (101.1003), this process of revision continues. Reason, however, is eventually

chosen as a guide and enough harmony is achieved for the advance which is made in the penultimate stanza of this 1596-line poem up the rock to acquire the cherry.

Yet the fruit falls simply and of its own accord (101.1578). Undercut not only by this offhand way of concluding, the narrative force of the poem yields throughout to interludes in which the debate between the cherry and the slae is protracted diffusively, digressively, far beyond its initial focus. Moreover, the text becomes generically diverse. Personification allegory is a prominent element of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, while the battle of aphorisms in which the poem's characters engage is also a common way of generating debate and dialogue. A further genre is made reference to when an exasperated Experience says of Will and Despair, "Let them two flyte their fils" (101.794). Nor are Montgomerie's personifications restrained by their allegorical natures. "Angry as an ape," Will runs "ramping, swearing, rude and rape [*hasty*]" (101.883-84), a transformation which is anticipated in Reason's discussion of the beastlike condition which the speaker might anticipate if he were to follow the wrong party (101.830-40). The allegorical dimension of *The Cherrie and the Slae* is offset by the dramatic, at times farcical action which is produced through language. Formal experimentation, or the "Invention" which King James praises, is not easily sustained or perceived, as the incompleteness of the first version of the poem attests. Not is it necessarily achieved in the protracted and fragmented second version.

These obstacles to appreciation make all the more understandable twentieth-century critics' tendencies to concentrate their readings on partial, accessible goals. It is less the debate of the poem than its opening sequence which attracts the critical attention of both Ian Ross and Helena Shire. In his article on *The Cherrie and the Slae*, the former provides a *précis* of Montgomerie's poem, all but the last three sentences of which describe the narrator's beguilement by Cupid (80).

The summary which Ross provides is written in the third-person, thus heightening the narrative force of the poem: the persona is at once a “Dreamer” and a “Narrator,” terms which locate the text, and Ross’s own reading of it, within the tradition of the allegorical dream-vision. In her monograph *Song, Dance and Poetry in the Court of Scotland under King James VI*, Shire also provides a prose summary of the action of the poem. She draws greater attention than Ross does to the dream elements of *The Cherrie and the Slae* by citing a visionary “I” in her outline of it (120-21). Shire’s *précis* is longer and details the narrator’s sensations and thoughts before, during and after his encounter with Cupid. She begins thus: “On a bank in spring I lay alone and mused among the happy creatures of the season and the delights of sight and sound” (120). The space which Shire allots in her overview of the poem to its debate is again, as in Ross’s article, curiously disproportional to the lines which it occupies within *The Cherrie and the Slae* itself. Both Ross and Shire undertake readings which prioritize the opening sequence of the poem because, in their estimation, it shapes the debate which follows. In relating his adventures, moreover, Shire’s first-person narrator also gives the impression of greater self-awareness than he deserves, given that he spends the majority of the poem trying to make up his mind. Although misleading representations of aspects of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, these summaries of the poem remain useful for the light which they shed on each critic’s interpretation of it.

In his reading of *The Cherrie and the Slae*, Ross examines its classical and medieval antecedents. The form, setting and meaning of the poem – and the court culture of which it forms a part – can be located within a larger European context. The opening sestet of the fourteen-line stanza is a feature of medieval lyric, the ensuing quatrain is a common measure of folk song and of courtly verse. Meanwhile, prototypes for the wheel of the bob-and-wheel stanza of Montgomerie’s poem can be found in secular medieval Latin poetry (81-82). In his use of setting

Montgomerie adopts a “well-worn convention” made use of in *The Palice of Honour* and in *The Goldyn Targe*, not to mention in English models established by Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate (84). For Ross, it is the *Roman de la Rose* that exercises the greatest influence on Montgomerie’s poem and its use of setting as a discursive landscape for topics such as love and religion (84-85). The meaning of the poem is hard to pin down, for *The Cherrie and the Slae* can be elucidated by means of reference to the “*Quaestione d’amore*” of troubadours and *trouvères*, to the psychomachia between Virtue and Vice, or to courtly and religious allegory (88-90). As Ross writes, “[e]ither suggestion might be a clue to the poem’s meaning, or simply something read into it; there is no conclusive evidence” (89).

In her reading, Helena Shire undertakes a more ambitious version of the kind of reading which Ross initiated. Following the example set by early responses to *The Cherrie and the Slae*, Shire reads Montgomerie’s poem for the profounder religious and political meaning which is contained therein (119). As she writes, “A poesy could be sharply relevant to the present though devised as a complication of earlier patterns of imaginative composition, a variation on time-honoured themes” (120). Montgomerie’s use of setting would have been readily understood by an audience familiar with the landscape of the mind characteristic of dream poetry and the movement towards enlightenment which it produces (122). The generic love-adventure also occasions this progression towards fuller self-knowledge, while the poetic genre of *débat* gives rise to contending voiced personae in whose exchanges progression towards a mean can be discerned (126). The traditional psychopomp of dream poetry is here fragmented into the voices of the inner debate and assist the “I” of the poem in his suspension between competing alternatives: “the cherry/delicious/lovely and refreshing/delectable/high and inaccessible/fruit of heaven/Christ-eucharist symbol on its Tree – against the Slae/bitter/black and uninviting/harsh

and unpleasing/thirst-quenching only for a time/low and accessible on its Bush” (126). In veiling the matter of his poem in a layered way, Shire’s *Montgomerie* suggests what the true sovereignty of Scotland should be, for the cherry represents heavenly fruit, the right choice of earthly spouse and in religion as well (128). Shire thus reads *The Cherrie and the Slae* as a mimesis of “mighty and complex matter,” an encoded message to the king which is wrapped up in the familiar genres and figures of literary tradition.

Montgomerie’s use of form poses problems for another critic, however. For Roderick J. Lyall the narrator’s failure to fly with Cupid’s wings signals the poem’s ultimate limitations and, perhaps, even those of the “Castalian” project of James VI and his court poets (*Montgomerie* 318). According to Lyall, *Montgomerie* strives for the impossible in applying the lyric form to an extended allegorical narrative: the attention to local detail which Montgomerie’s use of the stanza-form produces weakens the narrative force which emerges from the poem’s weighty debate. Lacking momentum, the rhetorical debate of this imperfectly balanced poem and the larger patterns of meaning which it should produce instead give way to local effect, thus transforming *The Cherrie and the Slae* into a “characteristically Mannerist work” (*Montgomerie* 111). In Lyall’s description, Mannerism is escapist, an “aesthetic flight from conflict and doubt, which articulates the crisis as much by excluding it as by finding appropriate rhetorical forms for expressing it, lead[ing] to the elevation of detail over formal coherence” (*Montgomerie* 16). The fragmentation which is produced by the redirection of attention to the local level is a central feature of Mannerism and one which Lyall finds in *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Another characteristically Mannerist element of the poem is the assimilation of art to nature which is evident in its opening sequence (*Montgomerie* 325). Nor does the poem alienate a Protestant Scottish readership but rather transcends its courtly origins and presents a comprehensive view

of the Christian's spiritual dilemma, while adapting the medieval *psychomachia* to a sixteenth-century context (*Montgomerie* 331). Resolution is achieved through moderation and the use of proverbial wisdom in the debate between opposing forces. And yet formally *The Cherrie and the Slae* works against this kind of narrative progression, for Montgomerie's use of the lyric form fragments the traditional dream vision into a Mannerist array of detail.

In one of his emblems Andreas Alciato depicts a boy hanging from the branches of a palm-tree. The motto is "*Obdurandum adversus urgentia*," or "Stand firm against pressure." The text which accompanies this image gives advice of two different kinds, however: the tree signifies patient endurance, rising up in spite of the burden which presses it down, while the boy represents an active form of resolve, for he edges his way along the branches and gathers their fruit. As a result of this layering of motifs, the narrative force of Alciato's emblem is reduced and makes way for the balancing of alternative forms of resolve. The same layering of voices can be found on Alexander Seton's ceiling at Pinkie House, where mottoes offering different advice are gathered together within the same architectural and conceptual space. *The Cherrie and the Slae* is equally multifaceted and the experience of reading it at times labyrinthine in a way that recalls medieval precedents represented in the *House of Fame* and the *Palice of Honour*, where the setting of the latter, for instance, is nightmarishly double, a "fair Herbrrie [*garden*]" that is "maist like to Hell" (l. 2094). Doubt, as the sequence which follows the speaker's fall suggests, is itself a hellish condition. What Lyall perceives as a failure to integrate form and content successfully might more persuasively be understood in terms of the staging and reframing which, I would argue, is a significant feature of Montgomerie's poem. While the summaries of *The Cherrie and the Slae* which both Ross and Shire provide suggest readings which are insufficiently attentive to the fragmentary nature of Montgomerie's poem, Lyall's perspective is

equally un compelling in its deferral to Mannerist display and dismissal of the text's overall narrative force. An approach which posits a productive relation between the apparent fragmentation of the poem and its overall narrative structure is necessary at this stage in critical readings of *The Cherrie and the Slae*. The lack of rhetorical momentum which Lyall attributes to Montgomerie's use of a Mannerist style might instead be understood as figural layering and the outcome of practicing, as James advises in his *Reulis and Cautelis*, invention in poetry.

As noted above (pp. 38-41), Montgomerie elsewhere presents and immediately reworks motifs, as in "MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR," where the image of the rock is revised to express a multifaceted steadfastness, at once patiently enduring and virtuously obedient. The narrative pull of the poem's second section is delayed by the speaker's doubling back on the motifs which he presents at its outset: the "rending reid" and the "trees" yield the floor to the rock, which "nather bowis nor breks" (Poem 34, l.38). The rhetorical force of this logical progression is restrained by the poet's subsequent combination of monometric, dimetric and trimetric verse lines: "So sall my harte / With patient parte / Remane / A rok all rigour to resist" (Poem 34, ll. 39-42). In the same way that the speaker of "MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR" works within different, yet overlapping, conceptual modes, so the same process can be perceived in Hope's creation of an epitaph for the speaker, should he make the wrong decision and fall prey to Melancholy:

Then shal be graven upon that place
Which on thy tombe is laide
"Sometime there liv'd such one," alas,
But how shal it bee said?

“Heere lyes now but prise now
Into dishonours bed
A coward,” as thou art,
“Who from his fortune fled” (101.567-74)

Although Hope’s reworking of the epitaph is not as sophisticated as the figural layering which Montgomerie’s speaker undertakes in “MELANCHOLIE, grit deput of DISPAIR,” the act of revision remains the same, so that one might even imagine the latter exclaiming “But how shal it bee said?” in working through the motifs – reed, oak, and rock – at his disposal. I would like to suggest that this kind of staging and reframing is a significant feature of *The Cherrie and the Slae* and helps to account for what Lyall perceives as the poem’s failure to integrate form and content successfully.

Montgomerie’s multifaceted representation of the heart in the stanzas which follow the speaker’s fall and abandonment by Cupid consists in figural layering which captures the speaker’s state of conflict at this moment in the poem. The speaker engages in a paratactic sequence of actions that fail to produce what might be considered as any real action, at the middle of which can be found his real dilemma, namely “I doubted what to doe” (101.244). Montgomerie’s repetition of “And” and “Sometime” serve to heighten this impression of uncertainty and the speaker’s experience of being tossed about by various alternative courses of action (101.240, 241, 242, 243, 245). A sore heart is one of the outcomes of the speaker’s affliction: “To be opprest with such a page [*boy*], / Lord if my heart was saire” (101.248-49). This use of the image of the heart accords with its application two stanzas further on, where the speaker, “More like Anatomie than man,” withers away (101.267-68). Anatomical disintegration

ensues – “My veines by brangling [*shaking*] like to break, / My punses lap with pith [*My pulse rushes vigorously*] (101.173-74) – and includes the speaker’s heart: “As waxe before the fire I felt / Mine heart within my bosome melt / And piece and piece decay” (101.270-72). And yet this bodily heart is personified at the end of the stanza, where it seeks to flee the flames and to “leape at libertie” (101.280). In the previous stanza, furthermore, it is animated by two forces: “Then felt I Courage and Desire / In flame mine heart with uncouth fire / To me before unknown” (101.253-54). The heart is at once a part of the speaker “cairfull [*suffering*] corps” (101.282) and a means of representing his dilemma. But it also acquires proverbial force in the stanza which follows. The speaker’s heart is contained with the prison of his breast and is

Like to a fish fast in a net
 In deadthraw undeceast, [*death-throes*]
 Which, though in vaine, it strives by strength
 For to pul out her head,
 Which profites nothing at the length
 But hastning to her dead. (101.285-90)

The object of this commonplace simile is not only the speaker’s heart, however, but the speaker himself, who is drawn into the proverb by the lines which follow:

With thristing and wristing [*pushing; twisting*]
 The faster still is sho. [*more frustrated*]

There I so did lye so

My death advancing to. (101.291-94)

The comparison which begins with “Like” appears to describe the heart which is trapped and “With sighs so sopped [*consumed*] and ou’rset” (101.284), and yet also flows into the final lines of the stanza and concludes with “so,” twice repeated. The image of the heart in this section of *The Cherrie and the Slae* is deployed in a multifaceted way, drawn in as many figural directions as the alternative modes of action which confront the poem’s afflicted speaker.

In reframing the speaker’s plight in this way, Montgomerie claims a space for him within the context of the poem, for, rather than withering away, he emerges as the object of the simile of the fish caught in a net and as the subject of the heart’s various activities. What is also being reframed in this stanza, therefore, is the self and his relationship to space: the speaker’s experience is expressed by means of multiple and overlapping points of reference. As Skill, referring to himself and his personified companions, enjoins the speaker, ““Give place now, incace now, / Thou get us not againe” (101.993-94). Similarly, space is claimed and progress is recited in Montgomerie’s poem entitled “The Navigatioun” where the speaker articulates his presence and then describes his journey. In *The Cherrie and the Slae* Wisdom gives Experience leave to speak of the speaker’s fall (101.732-42). Experience then appears on stage and recites the event in question and his presence at it: ““For I Experience was there, / Like as I use to be all where” (101.757-58). Part of the dynamic of Montgomerie’s poem thus revolves around the creation of space: room is made not only for the personifications whose voices occupy so much of the poem but for new modes of expression as well, for the forms which, though divergent, are applied to the representation of a shared object.

The compendious knowledge which the proverbs deployed throughout *The Cherrie and the Slae* represent offer another opportunity for the poem's personified characters to step on stage. The proverbs based on the phrase "Tak tyme in tyme" (Whiting 2.141) become spaces in themselves which more than one personification occupies in the course of Montgomerie's poem. It is first spoken by Danger who is, however, reporting Wisdom's lesson "Which is in time for to take tent [*heed*] / And not when time is past repent / And buy repentance dear" (101.424-26). It is interesting to note the rapid, fluent layering of voices which takes place at the site of this proverb. Later on in the poem this expression emerges again as Courage, having just quoted "Chirurgians" who say "'Oft-times deferring of a day / Might not be mend the morne,'" declares "Take time in time ere time be tint / For time will not remaine" (101.494-98). The proverb again occurs within a polyphonic setting. The large body of received knowledge which proverbs represent becomes a space in itself where different, contending personifications come into being and into voices of their own.

Hope, for instance, first takes the stage in reworking a proverb which is articulated by Danger. Responding to Courage, Danger urges caution and opens a new stanza with the following: "But yet to mind the proverb call: / Who uses perils perish shall: / Short while their life them lasts" (101.519-21). Danger is cut off at this point by Hope, who appears within the poem for the first time and presents an alternative perspective to the one which has just been set forward: "'And I have heard,' quoth Hope, 'that he / Should never shape [*resolve*] to saile the sea / That for all perils casts'" (101.522-24). The point of transition between proverbs also becomes a site for the emergence of a new personified being within the poem. The term "perils" is used by Danger for the evocation of one proverb, while it brings to mind a second, contending proverb based on the motif of sailors anticipating dangers at sea. Danger's proverb thus provides Hope

with an opportunity not just to speak but to come into dramatic existence. The aphorisms deployed within *The Cherrie and the Slae* can thus be related not just to the poem's larger debate but to the concept of space as well, thus heightening the significance of Skill's request to the speaker to "Give place now."

Space is not just given but also shared in Montgomerie's poem. Proverbs are transformed into sites for the layering of the perspectives which the poem's allegorical personifications represent. Conceptual modes, such as the image of the heart, are given a multifaceted existence within the text. Generic categories are integrated in a similar way. Allegory, for example, transforms elements which are present early on in the text in a different form. After quoting the "Chirurgians," Courage pronounces a series of proverbs and urges the speaker to show resolve, for "Such gets ay as sets ay / Stout stomacks to the brae [*hilly course*]" (101.503-04). The passage is proverbial and the term "brae" refers to a steep slope or bank rising from the water (DOST, *brae*, 1 and 2). Such a brae forms the centerpiece of the poem's setting: literal and allegorical modes of representation thus overlap within Montgomerie's poem. Also subject to transformation are the personifications themselves. Should he choose to follow Will the speaker, Reason insists, will be "[n]ought but a brutal beast" (101.832). He then invokes a proverb with narrative force:

"Goe leare yet a yeare yet [learn]

Your Logick at the schools.

Some day then yee may then

Passe Master with the Mules." [*Master of Arts*]

(101.837-40)

Like the misguided speaker, Will is “nought but a brutal beast.” He is literally so a few stanzas later on in the poem when, “angry as an ape,” he “[r]an ramping, swearing, rude and rape. / Saw he none other shift [*recourse*]” (101.883-85). The transformation of the speaker finds formal expression in the mutation of the poem’s texture. Allegorical, proverbial and literal modes of representation overlap in *The Cherrie and the Slae*, sharing their space in the same way as do the text’s personifications.

The conflation of genres and motifs which occurs in Montgomerie’s poem can thus be related to the layering of personified voices also contained therein. At more than one point in *The Cherrie and the Slae*, furthermore, it is not evident which of the characters of the debate is speaking. After Experience recites the narrative of the speaker’s fall, a new stanza begins with “My custome is for to declare / The truth and neither eke nor paire [*never augment or impair*] / For any man a ioate [*jot*]” (101.771-73). The voice warns against Will’s allurements and concludes in the following way: “‘Thinke on, you, on yon now,’ / Quoth Wisedome then to mee” (101.783-84). Until the final line of the stanza, it can easily be assumed that Experience is still speaking, for his aim is, after all, the same as Wisdom’s, namely to urge the speaker to submit himself to them rather than to Will (101.785-86). It is the suspension of meaning in this stanza that causes the voices of Experience and Wisdom to appear to overlap: the sharing of space and the layering of perspectives which occur in *The Cherrie and the Slae* are the outcome of deferral. It is interesting to note this pattern at work in the layout of the stanzas which comprise Montgomerie’s text. Frequently in the poem’s debate the final lines of a personification’s speech begin a new stanza before another character assumes the floor. Courage’s first set of advice to

the speaker is structured in this way, with the final three lines which he speaks occupying the first three lines of the stanza which is mostly comprised of Danger's subsequent response to him:

‘What canst thou losse when honour lives?
Renowne thy virtue ay revives
If valiantly thou end.’

Quoth Danger, ‘Huly friend, take head. [Cautiously]
Untimous spurring spillles the stead.’ (101.393-97)

Although enjambement is used in the opening sequence of the poem and near its end as well, it does not feature prominently in the debate which occupies the center of *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Lyric form, as Lyall has noted, hinders narrative progression. But, like many of the poem's elements, enjambement undergoes transformation and functions discursively rather than formally within Montgomerie's text: although the stanzas themselves are contained units, in substance they are not. The perspective which one stanza holds is continued over into the next, a form of discursive enjambement that is akin to the layering of voices, motifs, and genres which comprise the texture of Montgomerie's poem.

Near the end of *The Cherrie and the Slae* the speaker's resolve increases and enjambement is used to express this growing commitment to action (101.1385-86; 1442-43; 1484-85). The narrative momentum which Montgomerie's use of form produces is, however, brought to a halt when the cherry falls of its own accord in the second-last stanza of the poem: when the speaker and his personified companions reach the tree, “there suddenly / The fruite for ripnes fell ...” (101.1576-77). Form in this case acts in counterpoise to content. The force of the

linear effect which enjambement produces is restrained by the anticlimactic outcome of the poem. Recalling the undercutting colloquialism of the final rhyme of Montgomerie's "MELANCHOLIE," the moment approaches bathos. What Lyall regards as a tension between the form and content of *The Cherrie and the Slae* might, rather, be regarded as the intended outcome of poem's natural ebb and flow: Montgomerie's layering of motifs and genres produces not narrative progression but rather the poise and counterpoise that are themselves representative of a particular state of existence. Even the stanza form of *The Cherrie and the Slae* performs its own balancing act. The deferral of the second rhyme in the sestet pushes the reader to look for its completion further ahead. The transition from couplets to the interwoven rhyme endings of the quatrain also increases the pace of the stanza, but the cadence of the "wheel" quatrain which follows counterbalances that growing momentum. Equilibrium is established in the first and third lines of this quatrain, each of which rhymes internally (Saintsbury 283-84). The elements of the stanza ebb and flow and the overall effect is harmony. So also the contending perspectives of the poem's debate are balanced against each other and share the same formal and discursive space. The second rhyme of the sestet is often spoken by one personification and completed by the other: "Who uses perils perish shall; / Short while their life them lasts" is spoken by Danger and waits for its formal completion by Hope, whose first lines of response end with "That for all perils casts" (101.520-21, 524). The ebb and flow of Montgomerie's stanza feature in *The Cherrie and the Slae* as a whole.

And yet Montgomerie's use of enjambement near the end of the poem serves to express the resolve which has arisen among the personifications therein (101.1386-87, 1442-43, 1484-85). Nor is this the only moment of progression in *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Rather, the poem enacts the speaker's movement toward greater self-awareness. That Pleasure, Hope and Danger

should appear when the speaker approaches the rock and perceives the cherry and the slae is suggestive of a relation between action and self-knowledge: part of the drama of the poem rests in the speaker's recognition of the impulses contained within him. Where before he "doubted what to doe" (101.244), after he sees the alternatives before him he acquires a new sense of resolve: "Aspyring but tiring / To get that fruite I sought" (101.354-55). But the cherry is more difficult to reach than expected and the speaker stands looking up at it, changing his purpose, at which point in the poem a debate between Dread, Danger and Despair, on the one hand, and Courage, on the other, begins (101.361-68). Although torn between the alternatives before him, the speaker has nevertheless acquired a new sense of his desires and of the impulses which guide them. In the sequence which follows the debate revolves around whether to strive for the cherry or to settle for the slae, an opposition which is eventually transformed into a larger polarization of voices within the self. Hope appears, as do Experience, Reason, Wit and Skill, who confront the overly hasty Will. Relations between the various personified voices are worked out and a guide, Reason, is chosen from among them. But it is the speaker who is told to "Advise" (101.927) them. The various moments of transition in the poem are part of the speaker's own progression toward greater self-awareness. The organization of each of the characters, for example, can be read as an expression of new understanding within the speaker himself (101.1341-44). Each is assigned his "proper place," much unlike the speaker's condition after his fall, in which chaos reigned and "piece and piece" decayed (101.272). The reassembling of the self constitutes the dramatic action of the poem. As Reason declares of himself and his companions, "I hope this play may bee composed / That we may goe together" (101.1339-40).

Such moments of recomposition thus produce the overall narrative arc of Montgomerie's poem. Old modes of expression are also reworked in the *Reulis and Cautelis*: new forms of the

“cuttit and broken verse” for which *The Cherrie and the Slae* serves as an example are being “daylie inventit to the Poetes pleasour” (68). “Ane of the cheif vertewis in a Poete” (66), invention is everywhere present in Montgomerie’s poem. The layering of motifs and genres which is evident throughout the *Cherrie and the Slae* is an example of invention, for it represents Montgomerie’s search for new forms of expression. The multifacetedness of the text may be less an inheritance from an earlier medieval context, therefore, than a characteristic of the court culture in which it was produced. Moreover, it is invention which keeps the speaker moving towards self-awareness, for the poem’s moments of transition are also points at which Montgomerie finds new ways of representing his speaker’s experience. In reworking the proverb advanced by Danger, for example, Montgomerie gives voice to Hope and initiates a new phase in the narrative structure of the poem (101.519-24). The reconstitution of the self which is a remedy for the speaker’s fall and near-destruction finds formal expression in the composition and recomposition of the poem’s elements. Likewise the poet refuses to settle in the same space but instead carves out new venues for literary activity through the creation of new modes of representation. The “play” of *The Cherrie and the Slae* is manifested as “Invention”; its “new forms” as progression toward a new self.

CONCLUSION

Tradition, Invention, and the Harmonious “Play” of Scottish Literature

By transforming his name into an anagram in “The Poets Complaint of his Nativitie,” Alexander Montgomerie practises the kind of invention which James VI praised so highly in his treatise on the making of Scottish poetry. That the king should feel a need to write such a guidebook when so many had already been printed in England and France by 1584 suggests that the Scots language was in its own right a challenging medium for poetic composition. Henryson’s organic metaphor for the making and reception of poetry remains valid as Scottish poets continue to till the language, or “bustious eird,” which is at their disposal. What emerges from this act of cultivation is a literature which is at once highly inventive and yet still firmly grounded in an established cultural heritage. Montgomerie’s anagram can thus be taken to represent the twofold nature of poetic composition in early modern Scotland. In rearranging the letters of ALEXANDER MONTGOMERYE to read “EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN,” Montgomerie achieves more than mere poetic effect, engaging rather in an act of creative and self-assertive recreation which recalls James VI’s injunction in the *Reulis and Cautelis* to “invent your awin subject your self.” Montgomerie contracts his inventiveness to the letters his name provides, a restricted set he remixes into a miniature self-portrait. Anagrams rely on the reader’s recognition of the witty relation between the original orthographic sequence and its recombination. *In parvo*, Montgomerie’s anagram illustrates a theme of the making and reception of early modern Scottish poetry, namely the twin pattern of rootedness and transformative invention. The choice of the poet’s name as the material for recomposition also suggests the reframing of the self which informs the writing of poetry in that period.

Writ large, poetic invention arises in early modern Scotland from the rehandling of old, seemingly fixed letters and identities. To a degree, such practices have international currency. In his essay “The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After,” Alastair Fowler draws attention to the indebtedness of early modern poets across and beyond Europe to the generic modes established in the Middle Ages. Observing that “the Renaissance was not always characterized by new forms,” he then proceeds to illustrate how it “worked by adapting old forms or imparting to them a new spirit” (1). As such, genres constitute less fixed systems of interpretation than what Fowler describes as “domains of association,” dynamic repositories of meaning which are subject to change and creative appropriation. The process which Fowler describes can be observed in early modern Scottish literature and definitively in Alexander Montgomerie’s verse. Montgomerie recombines Boethian retreat and the conventional associations of pastoral verse in a turning away from the usual realms of earthly affiliation and toward a spiritualized form of neo-Stoicism. The double relationship between royal apprentice and master courtier that informs James’s use of Montgomerie’s verse in the *Reulis and Cautelis* is reworked by Montgomerie to express an affiliation of a wholly different and exclusive nature, namely that which exists between the poet and his greatest master, God. Montgomerie’s striking a new stance in Scottish literature corresponds to T. S. Eliot’s description of the effect of “novelty” on a pre-existing order, namely that slight readjustment of “the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole” (23). Montgomerie’s anagram once again comes to mind, for its elegiac proclamation of fleeting celebrity and lasting poetic achievement reflects back on the original source of its elements, the poet’s name and, by implication, the poet himself. The dynamic relation between the old and the new which Eliot describes is an important aspect of writing poetry in early modern Scotland: invention cannot exist without continuity, for

“novelty” is grounded in a received poetic heritage which is subject to change at every creative moment which succeeds it.

Montgomerie’s anagram also draws attention to the importance of names in the making and reception of established literary texts among Scottish poets of the early modern period, for names act as in themselves as domains of association available to the poet for cultivation.

“EXTOLD AMONG YE RARE MEN” consists in a lapidary assertion of poetic accomplishment and becomes especially significant when the practice of using anagrams on tombstones is considered (Cook 153). In the connection which is made between himself and literary fame, Montgomerie effectively transforms his name into its own repository of related associations: the values which the anagram expresses are affiliated with the poet from whose name they ultimately derive. Montgomerie’s use of his name in this sense is similar to the ascription of honourable virtues to Lethingtoun, the seat of the Maitland family and the object of praise in the anonymous poem contained in the Maitland Quarto Manuscript. The house itself serves an associative function, moreover, in that the praises lavished upon it are meant to be connected to its owner, Sir Richard Maitland. The virtues which Montgomerie associates with Lily Ruthven are embodied in the lily which the poet celebrates, while the names of Alexander Seton and his wife Margaret Hay acquire the same values which the painted ceiling at Pinkie House represents by being situated at its focal point. Transformed into the domains of association which Fowler describes, names thus become generic realms in their own right.

Montgomerie’s renovation of his name into an anagram in “The Poets Complaint of his Nativitie” can be regarded as an act of self-assertive recreation, for the poet reassembles the letters of his name into a set of values which are then attributable to him. In its earliest form the anagram was used in medieval French texts as a means of identifying the poet, the patron or the

poet's lady (Kibler and Zinn 31). Harrison T. Meserole associates the writing of anagrams with religious orders from the Middle Ages onward: "No mere verbal game, the anagram was intended to reveal aspects of a person's character that lay hidden in the letters of his name" (186). Montgomerie's use of the anagram thus points up not only a relation between its structure and the means by which tradition and invention play into the writing of poetry in early modern Scotland, but also draws attention to the intensely self-referential nature of literary composition in that period. Just as Montgomerie transforms himself into a figure associated with fame and achievement, so Scottish poets cultivate the literary heritage at their disposal in an act of poetic composition which is not just inventive but also deeply personal. In reworking van Veen's emblem in which the temperate man is depicted drawing water from a fountain by his side, for instance, Alexander Seton engages in a process of a similar kind, for once his portrait is added to the emblem he comes to embody the virtues which it represents. Seton becomes an emblem in his own right, associating himself with temperance in the same way that Montgomerie's name figures forth great poetic accomplishment. His name thus carries the same associations as van Veen's emblem figures forth, illustrating the centrality of personal identity to the reworking of established cultural traditions in early modern Scotland.

Seton's alteration of van Veen's emblem points up the significance of revision in Scottish culture. In reworking the literary heritage at their disposal, Scottish poets engage in an act of recreation and self-assertion, so that the Latin root of the term "revision" – namely, a "seeing again" – acquires special significance. In the *Reulis and Cautelis* James VI urges poets to be inventive, rather than writing of "sene subiectis." And anagrams themselves involve the transformation of one subject into a new one. In his monograph on anagrams Henry Benjamin Wheatley relates an anecdote about Henry IV who, playing on the name Bourbonius, described

himself as *bonus orbi* when a Huguenot but as *orbis boni* once having returned to the Roman Catholic faith (78-79). In recomposing the elements of his Bourbon name, Henry IV effectively reframes his own relationship to alternative religious affiliations, acquiring more than one identity in the process. The layering of motifs in Montgomerie's verse involves duplication and reduplication of a similar kind. Thus the multifaceted representation of the heart in *The Cherrie and the Slae* reflects the speaker's negotiation of the circumstances in which he finds himself. The heart is compared to a fish struggling within a net, an analogy which by its conclusion, however, has been applied to the speaker himself, who is "thristing and wristing" (101.291-92) through his own situation. The act of revision thus produces a new way of perceiving the self and the self's relation to a larger cultural, political, or religious context.

An important aspect of revision and deserving further consideration is metanoia, or the changing of one's mind. In *The Cherrie and the Slae* the hypothetical description of Melancholy's epitaph involves precisely such a corrective moment. Hope begins only to exclaim "But how shal it bee said?" before approaching the epitaph from a new and different angle. In rhetoric, metanoia refers to the act of correcting oneself. It can also be used to express a conflict within the speaker, for it creates the impression that he "is working out his words – that he is thinking, not just repeating something already thought out and polished" (Farnsworth 194). If the term is applied in this latter sense, *The Cherrie and the Slae* becomes a deeply metanoic text in its own right. Its debate is generated through corrective revision, as when Hope advances an alternative form of the proverb which is first introduced by Danger. As in metanoia, wherein "[d]ifferent views or impulses audibly struggle for the mastery" (Farnsworth 194), tensions of a similar kind constitute Montgomerie's poem. The mode of the debate becomes a means for the poet to represent the process of revision itself, so that *The Cherrie and the Slae*, like the figure

Hope as he imagines an epitaph for Melancholy, is a text which is being repeatedly written and rewritten. In its original usage, the term metanoia refers to spiritual conversion, repentance and a turning to God (Russell 26-27). What appears in to be mere self-correction carries profound significance, therefore, since the process of changing one's mind involves new vision as well. In *The Cherrie and the Slae* local moments of revision signal a speaker who is working towards a new understanding of self and of the relation of that self in space and time.

The Cherrie and the Slae may elicit frustration from the reader caught in its seemingly endless reframing. The protraction of debate and the deferral of physical movement suggest an irresolution that can border on chaos. Echo's fragmentary reiterations, mentioned early in the poem, threaten to offer an infernal prospect of the whole action of the poem. According to Rod Lyall, local effect and Mannerist display are at the heart of *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Lyall's reference to Mannerism demands further attention. Wylie Sypher located Mannerism in a period of instability in the development of Renaissance art. Devoid of the unity, equilibrium, and proportion which informed stylistic composition before it, Mannerist art was characterized by irresolution and illogicality, by "unresolved tensions and contradictions" (104, 123). According to Sypher, there is a gap in Mannerism between the logic of a structure and its constituent elements (124). Lyall reads *The Cherrie and the Slae* for the same disparity between the poem's individual parts, each of which seems to lead the reader in a different direction, and its overall narrative logic, or effective lack thereof. The constant reframing which occurs in Montgomerie's poem no doubt contributes to this impression of stasis and brings to mind the concept of the *mise en abyme* and the potential which it carries for unlimited recurrence. First coined by André Gide in 1893, the term *mise en abyme* has its origins in heraldry, for it was initially used to refer to the placement within a shield of a smaller, second representation of it (Dällenbach 7). Seton's

inclusion of heraldic devices on the ceiling at Pinkie House and the appearance which he makes in van Veen's emblem become especially significant in light of Gregory Minnisale's definition of the *mise en abyme* as "a process of representation within representation which points to the *mise en abyme* of consciousness that produces it and is engaged with it in the art experience" (49). The self-referential nature of internal duplication brings not only Seton to mind but the metanoic layering which occurs in Montgomerie's verse as well. As Minnisale points out, however, the *mise en abyme* is circular in outcome, suggesting "infinite regression by visual repetition or suggestions of repetitions internally within the matrix of the work of art" (50). The reframing of the self which occurs and recurs in Montgomerie's poetry and even within the ceiling at Pinkie House appears to go nowhere and thus corresponds to the Mannerist temperament which Lyall identifies in *The Cherrie and the Slae*.

The title of Montgomerie's poem suggests, however, an alternative way of viewing the apparent tensions contained therein. Balance is not a feature of Mannerism, as Sypher's reading of John Donne's poetic style illustrates. In the late Renaissance, the sonnet did not seek to resolve the dissonance between competing psychological and rhetorical directions, a clash which is formally apparent in the "wavering caesura, the sliding meter, [and] the wrenched accents" of Donne's "This is my playes last scene" (130). The stanza form which Montgomerie employs in *The Cherrie and the Slae* could not be more different from Donne's sonnet. As George Saintsbury has illustrated (and as James VI prescribed), the poem's stanza functions by means of ebb and flow, by the balancing out of competing impulses within its sixteen lines. The internal rhymes of the stanza's final quatrain serve to create equilibrium, and the overall cadence of the quatrain is weighed against the growing momentum which the stanza's first ten lines produces (283-84). The cherrie and the slae which constitute the title of Montgomerie's poem raise less the

problem of multiple perspectives and the formlessness associated with Mannerist art, but rather point up the harmony which is achieved in balance and the “almost academic canon of regularity” which Sypher identifies with the Baroque (212). The “unresolved tensions and contradictions” of Mannerist art are made to agree in the Baroque, which produces an “effect of decision, release and fulfillment” (184). The balancing out of divergent elements becomes a way creating a path towards action, while resolution is achieved through statement and counter-statement. *Contrapposto* – a term which in the visual arts refers to the “decorous and varied redistribution of weight and form” which the transfer of the body’s weight in a painted or sculpted figure to one leg produces (Semler 31) – is connected to the Baroque as well and associated with the use of antithesis in classical rhetoric and Renaissance literature (Semler 31; Hope and McGrath 167; Rougé 105-106). It can be used to express an aesthetic- philosophical ideal of cosmic balance (Tanner 117) and, more specifically, brings to the mind the Stoic’s highly systematized conception of the harmonious life (Long “Stoicism” 203). In a number of intellectual traditions, therefore, apparently contradictory elements exist for the sake of being harmonized together, thus lending significance of a new kind to the title of Montgomerie’s *The Cherrie and the Slae*.

The harmony which is achieved through balancing of opposites is an important feature of Montgomerie’s verse as a whole and suggests a relation between the presence of contending perspectives and the making of poetry itself. The competing alternatives which emerge from Montgomerie’s poetry include, among others, private and public, retreat and engagement, and standing and stooping. A further pair which underlies poetic composition for Montgomerie and for Scottish poets in general is that of the old and the new. In James VI’s instruction for translation, both of these are made to agree, for in the moment of invention, the poet is also

bound to his original, “as to a staik, to follow that buikis phrase” (66; as above, p.10). The apparent volatility of *The Cherrie and the Slae* is offset by a larger sense of formal control, so that the text is always yielding new elements and yet never straying from the main focus of its debate. In a similar way Montgomerie’s inventiveness is grounded in literary heritage, with the poet poised between traditions at the moment in which he brings past and present together. Montgomerie’s anagram comes to mind once again, for it too looks backwards at the same time as it looks forward, to its original form as much as to the new one deriving therefrom. Balance and harmony are implied in Douglas’s description of his relation to Vergil, for each poet is “attachit” one to the other. Filiation informs not just lines of poetic descent, or the creation of new genres as Fowler describes it, but one’s personal association with a set of cherished values as well: Seton’s inclusion of Ascanius next to Aeneas and Anchises establishes a pattern of past, present, and future which is sustained by the virtues expressed within the emblem. Although Montgomerie’s poetry becomes increasingly volatile, it remains grounded in literary tradition, so that the balance which is struck between old and new domains of association serves a stabilizing function within the self as well.

Old and new are not only balanced against each other, however, since it is in the harmonizing of both that the writing of poetry becomes possible. Flyting, for example, emerges out of opposition, since material creatively developed for abuse often depends on the “dependent independence” which takes place between contending sides (Mapstone 20). As in the Baroque, where resolution is achieved through the balancing of statement with counter-statement, so the presentation of contending alternatives and subsequent working through their relation to one another produces action. Near the end of *The Cherrie and the Slae* and just before roles are assigned to the poem’s various allegorical figures, Reason declares, “I hope this play may bee

composde / That we may goe together” (101.1339-40). In the *Dictionary of the Scots Language*, the verb “compose” means to effect a settlement or to reach an agreement in a matter (DOST, *compose*). The word “play” can refer to fighting (DOST, *play*, 1b) but, in this context, more likely corresponds to the affair or proceeding (DOST, *play*, 9c) consisting of the poem’s debate and requiring resolution. The harmony which comes from agreement significantly leads to action: the figures will then “goe together.” The verb “compose” in Scots also derives etymologically from the French word “composer,” referring to the act of placing elements together in combination. This sense of “composde” brings *contrapposto* to mind and the placement of different elements in relation to each other for the purpose of generating controlled action. *The Cherrie and the Slae* might itself be described in such a way, for it involves the composition and recomposition of competing perspectives in a way that itself constitutes action, or a move toward greater self-awareness. That the word “play” can also signify dramatic performance in Scots (DOST, 9) when the placement of parts in activating relation to each other is considered becomes deeply significant. Progress is thus achieved in the act of composition itself, for in *The Cherrie and the Slae* the generation of new forms is directly related to the speaker’s framing and reframing of elements contained within him, a process which itself constitutes narrative progression and an advancement towards greater self-awareness. As such, therefore, *The Cherrie and the Slae* becomes a poem about the impulses underlying the writing of poetry itself.

In the first of a sequence of sonnets addressed to the court poet and musician Robert Hudson, Montgomerie’s speaker declares, “Ye knau ill guyding genders mony gees / And specially in Poets” (Poem 72, I, l. 9). Poor living engenders many black moods. But it also produces poetry, the “g’s” which constitute the verse line in question (Lyall, *Montgomerie* 215).

While those letters may refer to the present poem of complaint, they may also be understood in terms of poetic composition more generally and thus point up an important relation between opposition and the making and reception of literature in early modern Scottish culture. An imposing field of debate is cultivated by the speaker in *The Cherrie and the Slae* and the harmonious balancing of apparently alternative perspectives is achieved as the speaker frames and reframes his relation to them by means of poetic innovation. In combination and recombination the poet works towards a greater sense of identity, a process which itself constitutes action. Early forms of pastoral verse present a competitive setting within which the creation of new poetic forms becomes possible, for poets seek to outdo each other via novel experimentation with established literary modes. The corrective impulse has generative outcomes, moreover, for the act of revision is also one of poetic invention. In order to be effective, the writing of poetry must be challenging, or so the image which Henryson invokes of the “bustious eird” seems to suggest. “Se [*See*] quha can do better” (40), Polwarth’s challenge to his critics in the opening section of the *Promine*, illustrates how the interaction of contending perspectives produces further poetic innovation in Scottish literary practice. Statement and counter-statement become a means of achieving harmony in the Baroque and in *The Cherrie and the Slae*, while opponents in flyting are mutually sustaining, for each depends on the other for material for invective. Montgomerie may have chased Polwarth from the bardic chair in the “chimney nook” (Poem 72, III, l.14) but followed him thence nonetheless.

WORKS CITED

- Alciato, Andreas. *Emblematum liber*. 1534. *Alciato at Glasgow*. Web. 20 May 2011.
- Allan, David. "'A Commendation of the Private Countrey Life': Philosophy and the Garden in Seventeenth-Century Scotland." *Garden History* 25 (1997): 59-80.
- . *Philosophy and Politics in Later Stuart Scotland: Neo-Stoicism, Culture and Ideology in an Age of Crisis, 1540 – 1690*. East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000.
- Alexander, William. "Anacrisis: or, A Censure of Some Poets Ancient and Modern." *The Works of William Drummond*. Ed. John Sage and Thomas Ruddiman. Edinburgh, 1711. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Web. 10 May 2010.
- Bath, Michael. *Renaissance Decorative Painting in Scotland*. Edinburgh: NMS, 2003.
- . *Emblems for a Queen: The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*. London: Archetype, 2008.
- Bawcutt, Priscilla. *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1976.
- . "'Mankit and Mutillait': The Text of John Rolland's *The Court of Venus*." *The Apparelling of Truth: Literature and Literary Culture in the Reign of James VI*. Ed. Kevin J. McGinley and Nicola Royan. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010. Pp. 11-29.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992.
- Brown, Keith M. *Noble Society in Scotland: Wealth, Family and Culture, from Reformation to Revolution*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000.

- Carruthers, Mary. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*. Ed. Larry D. Benson. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.
- Cook, Eleanor. *Enigmas and Riddles in Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.
- Coope, Rosalys. "The 'Long Gallery': Its Origins, Development, Use and Decoration." *Architectural History* 29 (1986): 43-84. SAHGB. Web. 14 April, 2011.
- Craigie, W. A., ed. *The Maitland Folio Manuscript*. 2 vols. Scottish Text Society, 2nd series 7, 20 (1919-27).
- . *The Maitland Quarto Manuscript*. Scottish Text Society, 2nd series 9 (1920).
- , et al., eds. *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*. 12 vols. Chicago/Aberdeen/Oxford: 1937-2004.
- Curtius, Ernst Robert. *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Bollingen, 1953.
- Dällenbach, Lucien. *The Mirror and the Text*. Trans. Jeremy Whitely and Emma Hughes. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1989.
- De Lorris, Guillaume and Jean de Meun. *Le Roman de la Rose*. Ed. Ernest Langlois. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914-24.
- Dilworth, Mark. "The Latin Translator of *The Cherrie and the Slae*." *Studies in Scottish Literature* 5 (1967-68): 77-82.

Douglas, Gavin. *The Palis of Honour*. 1501/02. Ed. David Parkinson. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992.

---. *Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld*. Ed. D. F. C. Coldwell. 4 vols. Scottish Text Society, 3rd series 25, 27, 28, 30 (1956-60).

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *Selected Prose*. Ed. John Hayward. London: Penguin, 1953.

Farnsworth, Ward. *Farnsworth's Classical English Rhetoric*. Jaffrey, New Hampshire: Godine, 2011.

Fischer, B., Gribomont, J., Sparks, H. F. D., Thiele, and R. Weber, eds. *Biblia sacra juxta Vulgatam versionem*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984.

Fowler, Alastair. "The Formation of Genres in the Renaissance and After." *New Literary History* 34.2 (2003): 185-200. *Project Muse*. Web. 21 June, 2012.

Fox, Denton. "Introduction." *Poems of Robert Henryson*. Ed. Denton Fox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981. Pp. xiv-cxxiii.

---, and William Ringler, eds. *The Bannatyne Manuscript*. London: Scolar Press and National Library of Scotland, 1980.

Hammond, Gerald, and Sylvia Adamson, eds. *The Bible in English, 990-1970*. Alexandria, Virginia: 1997-2011. Web. 6 Feb. 2011.

Harmon, William, and Hugh Holman. *A Handbook to Literature*. 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

- Henryson, Robert. *The Complete Works*. Ed. David J. Parkinson. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010.
- Historic Scotland, Fife Council. "Aberdour, Aberdour Castle Including Garden Terraces and Boundary Walls." Web. 21 Jun. 2012.
- Hope, Charles, and Elizabeth McGrath. "Artists and humanists." *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*. Ed. Jill Kraye. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1996. Pp. 161-88.
- Howard, Deborah. *The Architectural History of Scotland: Scottish Architecture from the Reformation to the Restoration, 1560-1660*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995.
- Hubbard, Thomas K. *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocritus to Milton*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998.
- Hume, Patrick, Sir. *The Promine, contening the maner, place and time, of the maist illuster King James the sext his first passing to the feildis*. Edinburgh: Henry Charteris, 1580. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 21 Jun. 2012.
- Jack, R. D. S. "Montgomerie, Alexander (early 1550s-1598)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Web. 28 Jan. 2010.
- James VI and I. *King James VI and I: Selected Writings*. Ed. Neil Rhodes, Jennifer Richards, and Joseph Marshall. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003.
- Kibler, William W, and Grover A. Zinn, eds. *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland, 1995.

- Lee, Maurice, jun. "Seton, Alexander, first early of Dunfermline (1556-1622)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Web. 15 Feb. 2011.
- Lerner, Laurence. *The Uses of Nostalgia: Studies in Pastoral Poetry*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- Le Saulx, Marin. *Théanthropogamie, en forme de dialogue par sonnets chrétiens*. London: Vautrollier, 1577.
- Lewis, Charlton T., and Charles Lewis. *A Latin Dictionary*. Reprint. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1951.
- Long, A. A. *Stoic Studies*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: California UP, 1996.
- . "Stoicism in the Philosophical Tradition: Spinoza, Lipsius, Butler." *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*. Ed. Brad Inwood. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003. Pp. 365-92.
- Lyall, Roderick J. "'A New Maid Channoun'? Redefining the Canonical in Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Literature." *Studies in Scottish Literature* 26 (1991): 1-18.
- . "'Thrie Truear Hairts': Alexander Montgomerie, Henry Constable, Henry Keir and Cultural Politics in Renaissance Britain." *Innes Review* 54.2 (2003): 186-215.
- . *Alexander Montgomerie: Poetry, Politics, and Cultural Change in Jacobean Scotland*. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005.
- . "Christian Humanism in John Rolland's *Court of Venus*." *Challenging Humanism*. Ed. Tom Hoenselaars and Arthur F. Kinney. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005. Pp. 106-25.

- Lynch, Michael. "Seton, George, fifth Lord Seton (c. 1530-1586)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: OUP. Web. 16 May, 2011.
- Machan, Tim William. *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- Macpherson, Rob. "Stuart, Ludovick, second duke of Lennox and duke of Richmond (1574-1624)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Web. 20 Feb. 2010.
- MacDonald, Alasdair. "Florentius Volusenus and Tranquility of Mind: Some Applications of an Ancient Ideal." *Christian Humanism: Essays in Honour of Arjo Vanderjagt*. Ed. Alasdair MacDonald, Zweder Von Martels, and Jan R. Veenstra. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009.
- Maitland, Richard. *The History of the House of Seytoun [...] with the continuation, by Alexander Viscount Kingston*. Ed. John Fullarton. Glasgow: Bannatyne Club, 1829.
- Manolaraki, Eleni. "Political and Rhetorical Seascapes in Pliny's *Panegyricus*." *Classical Philology* 104 (2008): 374-94. JSTOR. Web. 8 Nov. 2010.
- Mapstone, Sally. "Invective as Poetic: The Cultural Contexts of Polwarth and Montgomerie's *Flying*." *Scottish Literary Journal* 26 (1999): 18-40.
- Marot, Clément. *Les psaumes de Clément Marot*. Ed. Samuel Jan Lenselink. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1969.

Melville, James. *A Spirituall Propine of a Pastour to his People and A Morning Vision: or Poeme for the Practise of Pietie in Devotion, Faith and Repentance: Wherein the Lordes Prayer, Beleefe, and Commands, and sa the Whole Catechisme, and Right Vse Thereof, is Largely Exponed*. Edinburgh: Waldegrave, [1598]. *Early English Books Online*. Web. 2 May, 2010.

Meserole, Harrison T. *American Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*. Pennsylvania State UP, 1985.

Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.

Minnisale, Gregory. *Framing Consciousness in Art: Transcultural Perspectives*. New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi Press, 2009.

Montgomerie, Alexander. *Alexander Montgomerie: Poems*. Ed. David J. Parkinson. 2 vols. Scottish Text Society, 4th series 28-29 (2000).

Morford, Mark. "The Stoic Garden." *Journal of Garden History* 7 (1987): 157-59.

Norbrook, David. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984.

Parkinson, David J. "Alexander Montgomerie: Scottish Author." *Older Scots Literature*. Ed. Sally Mapstone. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005. Pp. 493-513.

---. "Orpheus and the Translator: Douglas's 'lusty crafty preambill.'" *Rhetoric, Royalty, and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*. Ed. Alasdair A. MacDonald and Kees Dekker. Leuven: Peeters, 2005. Pp. 105-20.

- . "Arcadia, Emulation and Regret in William Alexander's *Encouragement to Colonies*." *The Apparelling of Truth: Literature and Literary Culture in the Reign of James VI*. Ed. Kevin J. McGinley and Nicola Royan. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010. Pp. 252-65.
- Pearsall, Derek, and Elizabeth Salter. *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World*. London: Elek, 1973.
- Preminger, Alex, and T. V. F. Brogan. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.
- Ross, Ian. "The Form and Matter of *The Cherrie and the Slae*." *Texas Studies in English* 37 (1958): 79-91.
- Rougé, Bertrand. "Oxymore et contraposto, Maniérisme et Baroque: sur la figure et le mouvement, entre rhétorique et arts visuels." *Études Épistémè* 9 (2006): 99-129.
- Russell, James C. *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.
- Saintsbury, George. *A History of English Prosody from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day*. Vol. 1. London/ New York: MacMillan, 1923.
- Salmon, J. H. M. "Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989): 169-88.
- Semler, L. E. *The English Mannerist Poets and the Visual Arts*. Cranbury, New Jersey/ London/ Cranbury, N. J.: Associated University Presses, 1998.

Shire, Helena Mennie. *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under King James VI.*

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1969.

Sidney, Sir Philip. *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Ed. Victor Skretkowicz. Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1987.

---. *A Defence of Poetry*. 1595. Ed. J. A. Van Dorsten. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1966.

Sypher, Wiley. *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature, 1400-1700*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1955.

Tanner, Jeremy. *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece: Religion, Society, and Artistic Rationalisation*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006.

Todd, Margo. *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2002.

Warmington, E. H., ed., Falconer, W. A., trans. *Cicero: De senectute, De amicitia, De divinatione*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1971.

Wheatley, Henry Benjamin. *Of Anagrams: A Monograph Treating of their History from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time*. Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1862.

Whiting, Bartlett Jere. "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings from Scottish Writers before 1600." *Mediaeval Studies* 11 (1949): 123-205; 13 (1951): 37-164.